DOCTOR IN EDUCATION

What are the indicators of a successful international school partnership?

Developing an operationalized theoretical standard.

Thesis

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Abstract

This research develops a standard against which international school partnerships can be evaluated and assesses its applicability using the outcomes from a school partnership programme. The development of the 'successful school partnerships standard' for international links utilises a large literature review that incorporates good practice guidance and research into international partnerships. The study provides the UK educational context for international school partnerships and identifies areas where such partnerships can deliver school improvement. These educational drivers for school partnerships are mapped onto the 'successful school partnerships standard' to determine whether it provides a valid framework for comparing policy and practice. The 'standard' is assessed through its application as a means of evaluating to what extent the European-funded Comenius school partnerships programme can be deemed successful. The study builds an evaluation framework based on the 'standard' to assess the quality of the outcomes and impact of Comenius school partnerships and to consider whether the European-focused school partnerships differ in any important aspect from other global partnership programmes.

Mixed methods are used to assess the secondary data from the Comenius school partnership programme. Key findings from the study include:

1. The 'successful school partnerships standard' provides a useful framework for comparing school partnerships against the educational landscape

2. Comenius partnerships demonstrate a close alignment with the 'successful school partnerships standard'

3. Analysis of the Comenius data identifies the programme as an effective vehicle to support the delivery of two major education initiatives:

- *3.1 Developing a workforce with the necessary skills to live and work in a global economy: using the evaluation schedule the impact of Comenius school partnerships on learners is excellent*
- *3.2 Providing professional development for teachers: 75% of the Comenius schools' 483 final reports in 2010 rated the partnership highly for its impact on staff development that increased:*

- *leadership and management skills*
- *pedagogical expertise*
- *staff motivation*
- *knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures.*

Declaration of originality and the word count

I hereby declare, that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

The word count, using Microsoft Office Word 2007, (excluding appendices and bibliography) is: 44,978 words.

Angela Cook
10.6.2013

Statement: Lifelong learning in progress

The reason I embarked on a professional doctorate was to support my work by deepening my understanding of methodology, by sharpening my research skills and by enabling me to re-evaluate my epistemological stance. As an additional bonus I anticipated that I would have the opportunity to decode particular 'academic language', and to demystify 'academia' for myself. I wanted to be able to comprehend more fully research reports in order to utilise their outcomes, and I wanted to be in a position to provide critical appraisal of quantitative and qualitative studies. As a part of my job, I also need to be able to converse with senior academics on as level a playing field as possible.

My first assignment initiated me into a wide range of academic genres, as I explored the changing professional role of inspectors of non-association independent schools in England since 2004. It provided an opportunity to engage with ideas from the Age of the Enlightenment, to explore and challenge the attributes associated with a classical profession, and to stand back from everyday experiences in order to focus on the bigger picture. It enabled me to engage in a discourse about competency versus compliance, and to evaluate the role of audit in performativity. I find Power's (1994, p.49) argument that 'auditing is a peculiar form of alchemy' and that audit is not passive, but 'actively constructs the context in which it operates' (ibid, p. 8) compelling. My viewpoint is reinforced by Ball (2008, p.54) who suggests that the 'first-order effect of performativity is to re-orient[*ate*] pedagogical and scholarly activities towards those that are likely to have a positive impact on measurable performance outcomes'.

As a student member of the club of 'academic professionals' I also wanted to begin to challenge the way that the club maintains its status. I believe that 'academia' cultivates a language that acts as the profession's gatekeeper and is a fundamental barrier to wider participation. Just as Ofsted has directed that its reports be jargon-free and easily comprehended, so too must universities, I contend, decode their messages if they are to be guiding leaders in a changing world. Our priests no longer lecturer us in Latin and our GPs use simple terms to explain our health problems, and I believe, in the same way, our academic papers should look outwards and address our needs in a language we can understand. This is what I have attempted to do with my thesis.

My proposal to the Doctoral School in 2008 focused on whether face-to-face communication is an essential element of a successful relationship. I saw this as part of a drive for sustainability within the school partnerships programme in which I was working. The 2008 proposal was linked to work I had done many years earlier when I had registered for a PhD at the School of Environmental Studies, University College, London. This was deferred because of family commitments. The burning issue for me then, as now, is whether the inter-generational cost of the carbon footprint of international travel can be justified in terms of the quality of the school partnership. What are the factors necessary to effect a good partnership, and can a model be developed which builds capacity in terms of effective communication, without leaving a damaging legacy for future generations? Can we consolidate our learning from school partnerships in order to create sustainability in an ever-changing world?

My first assignment forced me to develop a realism about what is achievable within 3000 words. Having found a topic that really interested me I had difficulty in paring it down until it was of manageable size. However, it was not until I embarked on my second assignment (methods of enquiry 1, MOE1), that I realised just how unrealistic and aspirational my original 2008 proposal really was. The MOE1 assignment allowed me to plan a small scale study intended to explore how important face-to-face presence is in a 21st century global school partnership. I used the assignment as a basis for a proposal to a Client for a research project. Although well received, the work was put in abeyance as funding was unexpectedly reduced. This delay has been beneficial, because I have had further time to develop my thoughts and I would now approach the research differently. I have ensured that the research methods themselves mirrored the research questions and the methods were therefore part of the outcomes. Is communication more effective through face-to-face or by electronic means?

My third assignment provided me with the opportunity to explore recent work surrounding leadership and apply this to the programme on which I was working. The assignment explores the forms of leadership that promote an effective environment which support a flourishing school partnership in an English school. My conclusion is that distributing leadership of a partnership across teams representing the wider community will provide an effective environment in which long-term mutually-beneficial partnerships will succeed. This assignment encouraged me to explore further literature relating to school partnerships, which shed a different light on the outcomes of such partnerships.

My fourth assignment followed a different tack. An aim of the two school partnerships programmes on which I work is to widen participation in education by the 'harder-to-reach' group of students. In order to explore this I used the MOE2 assignment to develop and evaluate a process to compare a government funded school programme's social deprivation profile with each of the four UK nation's profiles and to track this over time. This informed the marketing and enabled the effectiveness of strategies intended to widen participation to be monitored and reviewed. I developed this line of enquiry in my institution focused study to incorporate profiles showing attainment as well as deprivation, and triangulated the outcomes against an alternative measure. The process was streamlined by my company and maps were added to provide a package that has successfully been used by other programmes wishing to demonstrate their widening participation over time.

My thesis has returned to the quality of school partnerships. What is it that makes a successful link? A large literature review identified many indicators, which I collated into an extensive spreadsheet. From this I constructed a theoretical standard that I operationalized so that it could be used in practice. Using the standard, I aligned policy from the four UK departments of education in order to determine whether there are drivers for school partnerships in the current educational landscape. In order to ascertain whether the standard can be applied to a school partnership programme, I evaluated it using both qualitative and quantitative data from the EU funded Comenius programme. The development of my theoretical perspective during my journey though the EdD persuaded me that I should analyse the data in a variety of ways that enabled cross-checking to be done between qualitative and quantitative outcomes. This makes a strong case for the operationalized theoretical standard, as it withstood detailed and extensive interrogation. On the basis of my work, I wrote an in-depth report for the National Agency that manages the Comenius programme evaluating the outcomes of their school partnerships. This report is shortly to be published.

At each stage the formative feedback has been helpful and has been incorporated into the final submission. The period between the initial and final submissions has provided time to reflect on and review the earlier writings. For example, the formative feedback on the Initial Special Course assignment raised a need for better signposting for the reader. Much work went into the next submission, which was rewarded with a 'well written and clearly presented' comment. Another comment, encouraging the development of a more critical stance, unlocked my inhibitions. Where I did not find the summative feedback sufficiently clear as to why a particular grade had been awarded, I sought further guidance. I can now look back at my 2008 proposal with interest, as it is

a baseline marker against which I can measure the development of my knowledge, understanding and skills. A review of literature has contributed significantly to my research methodology 'portfolio', and face-to-face sessions have widened my perspective and deepened my learning. I am now a new learner in a new world.

My doctoral studies have changed the way in which I work. As a project director I now employ a different style of leadership that distributes rather than delegates responsibilities. I am building a team that can continue without me. It is exciting to watch younger colleagues develop confidence through experience, and begin to take real ownership of their areas of responsibility.

A greater impact of my studies can be seen in new initiatives in which I am involved. I was appointed to a Welsh Assembly Government's steering committee that oversees a large research project. This has given me the opportunity to appraise critically the methodology and methods proposed by the researchers. The chair of the committee has been particularly appreciative of my input, and, in turn, I thank my assignment marker who suggested that I develop my critical stance.

Perhaps the most visible outcome from my doctoral studies to date has been the research skills course I have developed for teachers involved in a school partnerships programme. As a part of my remit on the consortium that managed the programme, I provided routes for teachers wishing to use their partnership learning as part of some form of accreditation. In many southern countries (for example, Ghana, India, Kenya and Rwanda) teachers graduate from their initial training with a certificate, rather than a degree. Many never have the opportunity for any further professional development. In some countries I have worked with universities, such as Makerere in Uganda, and Masinde Muliro in Kenya, to develop courses that teachers at certificate level can access. For a large number of those teachers it has been the beginning of a new motivated approach to learning for themselves and for their students. In some countries, however, the gap between teacher certificate and undergraduate studies is too large to be bridged. For teachers in these countries I have led an international team that has built on the programme's three professional development workshops and created a fourth one. This new workshop supports teachers in developing a critical lens using their global learning, so that they will be able to interrogate their work through development education epistemology. Already three cohorts of Indian teachers have undertaken this course enthusiastically. Following their initial training, they carried out a small study in their school during the following term. Their assignments provide rich

evidence of the impact of the programme. The course was then rolled out in Trinidad, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.

In conclusion, my doctoral studies have unlocked doors I didn't know existed. Although I find the 'academic club' enticing and have begun a 'love affair' with a literature that previously seemed impenetrable, I remain a staunch advocate of plain and simple English, because my work develops practical outcomes for others to use. The last sentence of my first assignment still encapsulates my mantra: 'the most important element of working as a collegiate professional is that I can apply my old mentor's adage, 'to do good as you go, lass' '.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

As the UK education systems evolve to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, one of the emerging requirements, for what Harris (2008, p. 14) calls our '24/7 generation' of learners, is the acquisition of social skills and awareness of difference, so that they can engage in effective intercultural dialogue, live 'in a global society and work in a global economy' as propounded by England's Department for Education and Skills (2004, p. 6). A growing body of writers, including, for example, Byram, Kühlmann, Müller-Jacquier and Budin (2004) and Ewington, Reid, Spencer-Oatey and Stadler (2009), argues that the skills for intercultural collaboration can be presented as a framework of competences. In order for these competences to be translated into dynamic learning, Ewington et al. (2009, p. 8) urge that the skills require practice and those participating should 'test out the knowledge they have acquired'. Reid, Stadler and Spencer-Oatey (2009) concur that people build understanding through experiences, and one way for students actively to learn the skills required for intercultural effectiveness and to develop cultural awareness is through international[1] partnerships. This viewpoint is endorsed by Bourn and Hunt's (2011, p. 16) research, which indicates that there is 'considerable value in some form of first-hand experience through an international partnership or link'. Honey (2000, p. 2) proclaims that 'learning from experience is arguably the most important of all life skills'. However, having an experience is not sufficient. Learning from experiences is a process which, Honey says, involves reviewing the experience, concluding what has been learned and planning for the next stage. I would extend this to include evaluating the learning and internalising it.

I have seen successful international school partnerships functioning as effective delivery vehicles for the development of skills for the twenty-first century. What I propose to do in this study is to collate the accumulated learning from current international school partnerships, in order to establish some form of framework to guide future policy makers, programme leaders and practitioners, who are seeking both to foster successful links and to evaluate the quality of them.

[1] For the purpose of this paper no distinction is drawn between 'international' and 'global'. It is accepted that 'international' is defined as meaning between nations whereas global means worldwide, but in practice these two are often used interchangeably in the context of school partnerships.

1.1 Aims of the study

The aims of the study are twofold and are framed by the research questions:

1. What are the indicators of a successful school partnership?
2. To what extent do school partnerships in the UK, which have been established through the EU funded Comenius programme, demonstrate success?

The first question seeks to identify the constituent parts of a successful international partnership or link[2] between two or more schools in different countries, in order to develop a 'successful school partnerships standard' against which school partnership programmes can be evaluated. I have decided to use the term 'standard' rather than 'framework', because the study identifies a model of good practice that arises from the analysis of a large body of literature and incorporates a wide range of reflections emanating from practitioners. The second question investigates to what extent the outcomes from school partnerships in the European Union (EU) Comenius school linking programme match those constituents of successful international partnerships identified in the standard. Comenius, which is available to schools, colleges and local authorities across Europe, aims not only to develop an appreciation of the value of diversity, including the diversity of European cultures and languages, but also to help young people acquire the necessary life skills and competences to live and work in a global economy.

Determining what successful actually means is a complex issue that is related to context, such as organisational, regional and national culture, the political environment and the economic drivers[3]. In this study, as discussed in more detail below, a partnership is deemed to be successful when it is perceived to be so by its stakeholders, which include the schools and their communities and the agencies managing the programme. Not all school partnerships are beneficial for all parties. Some, as Burr (2007) points out from her research, have the potential to be extremely damaging, since some poorly conceived links actually confirm prejudices rather than confront stereotypes. Global School Partnerships (2007b), a programme funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development (DFID), asserted that school partnerships should model good practice in order that pupils may have the opportunity of becoming more culturally aware and more able to function effectively in a multicultural environment. I managed part of this multimillion pound programme[4] for

[2] The terms 'partnership' and 'link' are used synonymously in this study.
[3] Drivers are policy-, theory- or practice-related initiatives that promote a change.
[4] Global School Partnerships arose out of a Millennium initiative called 'On-the-Line' in which schools on the Greenwich Meridian formed partnerships with similarly placed schools in Ghana.

nine years, during which time it fostered over 5000 partnerships in 64 countries worldwide. It strongly advocated partnerships in learning as a way of developing the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary in a global economy. My thesis attempts to demonstrate to policy makers, who require robust statistical evidence as well as narrative, the significant impact that school partnerships can have on our children. Using my positivist perspective, I want to prove that the outcomes and impact of school partnerships can be evaluated in the quantitative terms that are currently applied by policy makers, so that this mode of delivering international understanding can be reconsidered for future funding. I believe that school partnerships can be 'held to account'.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

The study is divided into two parts. The first encompasses an extensive literature review that identifies the salient qualities for successful, multicultural partnerships from the partners' perspectives and examines the UK context for UK school partnerships. Some of the texts are theoretically based, for example Bourn (2008a), while others, such as Oxfam (2007), are publications by practitioners. The review is used to define terminology, for example outputs and outcomes, and to develop an understanding of abstract concepts, such as success. It reveals some common criteria for successful school partnerships. These are used as the basis for the development of a theoretical, or theory-based, 'successful school partnership standard' against which data from the EU funded Comenius programme is mapped. Drivers that define the educational landscape in the UK are identified in order to provide a context for international school partnerships. Research shows that these public policy drivers, as Crompton (2010, p. 12) says, have an impact on 'shaping dominant public values, which in turn impacts on public support for new policies' and he adds that this is not surprising.

The second part of the thesis develops the mapping exercise in which the Comenius programme's data is aligned with the theoretical 'successful school partnership standard'[5]. This aspect comprises two stages. The first consists of an appraisal of the transferability of the standard from theory into practice. The theoretical standard's universality can be 'tested' by evaluating the alignment between the Comenius programme's assessment criteria and those of the theoretical standard. In the second stage the standard is used to evaluate the programme's data. While it cannot be

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The funding for the programme has now terminated.

[5] Hereafter, the theoretical 'successful school partnerships standard' is referred to as the theoretical standard.

proved that the standard has universal application, it is critical to test the hypothesis that this theoretical standard and its constituent parts form a useful common standard that can be applied in practice. As Popper (1959) argues, observations are used to disprove hypotheses rather than to prove them. He explains that the assertion that all swans are white can never be verified, and 'no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white' (Popper, 1959, p. 28). It can, however, be disproved by finding a black or non-white swan.

1.3 Contextualising the study

Tolerance, openness and broadmindedness are the core qualities embodied in the UK Human Rights Act 1998 (Human Rights Division Ministry of Justice, 1998). This Act arises from a treaty, the European Convention on Human Rights, first signed by Members of the Council of Europe in 1950. This early and most important treaty was designed to prevent the atrocities of the Second World War ever re-occurring. Winston Churchill was instrumental in bringing the Council together, which is distinct from the European Council, and it now comprises 47 member nations.

From my perspective as a teacher, I believe that tolerance, openness and broadmindedness are not necessarily innate qualities. In many cases they have to be learned. Just as any activity in the classroom needs revision, I believe that to embed these qualities in everyday living, they need to be practised, developed and revisited, since learning through doing is a powerful motivator. Embedding skills by working in a multicultural environment and experiencing life in a different country, with different foods, languages, and beliefs is, I believe, a fundamental cornerstone of developing the ability to celebrate difference. This view is supported by Bourn et al.'s (2011, p. 16) research, as noted in the introduction above. Both Reid et al. (2009) and Senge (1990) point out that people build understanding through experiences, but Senge (1990, p. 23) warns that there is a 'core learning dilemma that confronts organizations: we learn best from experience but we never directly experience the consequences of many of our most important decisions'. It is the formative feedback that is imperative for learning. As Reid et al. (2009) suggest, practising being tolerant or broadminded in one's own culture may provide challenge, but working in an international environment, where there are differences in beliefs, lifestyles and traditions, offers other and often greater challenges. If Senge's (1990) warning is applied, this means that while one's own immediate environment (including home, school and local community) may provide feedback to support learning, working in settings (including international ones) that

have 'first-order consequences in marketing and manufacturing' (Senge, 1990, p. 23) may not provide the opportunity for such feedback. Therefore, early learning in the classroom of intercultural skills and understanding is paramount. Without this a tension can develop that Giddens, in his book 'Runaway World' (1999, p. 4), expresses very effectively:

> *'The battleground of the twenty-first century will pit fundamentalism against cosmopolitan tolerance. In a globalising world, where information and images are routinely transmitted across the globe, we are all regularly in contact with others who think differently, and live differently, from ourselves. Cosmopolitans welcome and embrace this cultural complexity. Fundamentalists find it disturbing and dangerous. Globalisation lies behind the expansion of democracy, ...paradoxically it exposes the limits of democratic structures...'*

The ability to manage effective multicultural partnerships is increasingly important in the global world and consequent upon this is the need to provide an education that equips young people to live and work in a global economy. In the UK international strategies, such as 'Putting the World into World Class Education' (Department for Education and Skills, 2004), have been aimed at developing students into global citizens, who value diversity and social justice, but who also have the skills to think critically, to challenge inequalities, to argue effectively, and to resolve conflicts and negotiate peace.

As the interconnectedness of our world becomes increasingly apparent, it is paramount, as Reid et al. (2009) explains, for those involved in international trade to be good communicators, flexible, open, self-aware, have a proficiency in a language and have good cultural understanding. High aspirations of a global corporation may not be matched by the abilities of its staff, and Reid et al. (2009, p. 9) urge that 'human beings must adapt their individual cultural experience to operate in an international environment'. A recent report by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) (Nathan, 2011, p. 22) highlights the fact that 61% of employers 'perceive shortfalls in international cultural awareness among school and college leavers'. This emphasises the need to provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of difference. In the UK a number of well-established school, college and university partnership programmes is available. Some of these, such as Comenius and

Erasmus[6], are funded by the EU, while others, such as Connecting Classrooms[7], receive funding from the UK government or from non-governmental organisations.

A major concern for those managing educational partnerships is that they may not always be positive experiences for all concerned. It appears that some, identified by writers such as Leonard (2008), Martin (2007) and Andreotti (2006), are divisive and reinforce, rather than challenge, existing views. Oxfam (2007, p. 3) points out that poorly (Leonard, 2008) conceived partnerships may:

- *' close minds instead of opening them*
- *promote pity and sympathy for those in the poorer country, rather than empathy with them*
- *focus on differences, with too little recognition of a common humanity*
- *cultivate paternalistic attitudes and feelings of superiority*
- *fail to examine global issues of inequality and injustice'.*

Burr (2007, p. 4) explains that 'linking is a problematic area which, without considerable education and training, lends itself to encouraging patronising relationships and perpetuating and reinforcing stereotypes'. This is a view expressed by Martin (2008, p. 60) in her study of UK participants' experiences of 'spaces of displacement' during a study visit to the Gambia, in which she concludes (p. 73) that there is 'evidence that some approaches to overseas experiences are continuing to reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes and inequalities'.

Similarly, Greenholz's (2003) evaluation of the students' contributions to his cross-cultural communication course, in which Japanese students participate during a year's academic secondment to Canada, found that the submissions were:

> *'sometimes thoughtful and well reasoned, but far more often they were simplistic and shallow; unexamined stereotypes and one-time personal experiences expressed as (and understood by the author to be) universal truths.'*
>
> (Greenholtz, 2003, p. 125).

Not only can working outside the 'home' environment confirm prejudices, it can also result in serious problems. For example, Marginson's (2010) research considered the

[6] Erasmus is a student exchange programme at university level.
[7] This new programme has incorporated Global School Partnerships.

outcomes for overseas students who took the opportunity to study in Australia. He focused on the security of those students who were studying outside their own country, and undertook 200 interviews at 11 Australian universities with students from 35 countries. He identified some startling issues:

> *'Almost half of the international students interviewed said they had experienced cultural hostility or prejudice. A large proportion of interviewees had been abused on the street or on public transportation. In such cases, they had no process whereby they could claim rights and seek redress.'*
>
> (Marginson, 2010, p. 2)

The lasting damage of such experiences is significant. Marginson argues that human rights should not 'stop at the border of any country' (2010, p. 3). De Nooy and Hanna's (2003, p. 75) research into Australian students' experiences of studying in France similarly confirms that not all aspects of intercultural exchanges are positive:

> *'But whilst time in France undeniably encouraged personal growth and increased knowledge of aspects of French language and culture, striking intolerance and misunderstanding of French patterns of information distribution produced or reinforced a persistent negative stereotype.'*
>
> (De Nooy and Hanna, (2003, p. 75)

Andreotti (2006, p. 162) issues a warning that the 'reproduction of an uncritical 'missionary' or 'civilising' feeling in relation to the Global South [..] reproduces unequal power relations and obstructs cross-cultural dialogue' since it 'discourages individuals' willingness and openness to engage with difference'.

It is clear from the works cited above that multicultural collaboration can result in lasting damage. Reid et al. (2009, p. 4) point out that it is the 'high risks of mishandling intercultural interaction' that have 'prompted the development of a substantial literature both on perceived cultural differences and on the competencies that might be acquired to deal with this challenge'. At the same time as these competencies are being developed it is important to identify and evaluate the constituent parts that make a good partnership for all concerned.

1.4 The Comenius programme

The practitioner assessment criteria that are used to evaluate the theoretical standard are those applied to the outputs and outcomes of school partnerships in the Comenius programme. The overall vision for European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) is to aid 'the development of the [EU] Community as an advanced knowledge-based society' (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2006, p. 46) as part of establishing Europe's position as a world-class player in education and training. This aim is to be achieved by the promotion of 'high performance, innovation and a European Dimension in related systems and practices' (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2006, p. 49). The role of the Comenius programme is to address the 'teaching and learning needs of all those [i.e. including the institutions and organisations providing such education] in pre-school and school education up to the level of the end of upper secondary education' (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2006, p. 50). The LLP, which is funded by the Council of the European Union, is charged with widening participation in education, ensuring equity and delivering excellence. It provides opportunities for all areas of education so that greater understanding and co-operation prevail within Europe.

The European Commissions' goals (2011) for the Comenius programme are to:

- *'Improve and increase the mobility of pupils and educational staff across the EU;*
- *Enhance and increase partnerships between schools in different EU Member States, with at least 3 million pupils taking part in joint educational activities by 2010*[8]*;*
- *Encourage language learning, innovative ICT-based content, services and better teaching techniques and practices;*
- *Enhance the quality and European dimension of teacher training;*
- *Improve pedagogical approaches and school management.'*

(European Commission, 2011)

The programme, covering all levels of school education from early years to colleges for further education, is an agent that supports the acquisition of intercultural and language skills. It includes not only staff and pupils, but also local education authorities, representatives of parents' associations, non-governmental organisations, teacher

[8] This is a direct quotation. The website was updated in May 2011, but the 2010 date has remained unchanged.

training institutes and universities. Encouraging teachers and learners to participate in partnerships across Europe is seen as one way of developing greater social cohesion throughout Europe. Opportunities for school staff to develop their languages, to shadow European colleagues and engage in in-service training are other ways in which the programme pursues its aims. Having worked on the programme for six years, I can confirm that one of the programme's guiding principles is to build greater understanding between European schools and institutions in order to develop a more cohesive Europe.

As described in my earlier study (Cook, 2010), the programme comprises three broad decentralised strands: school partnerships between schools in the EU; professional development for school staff; and placements of European trainee teachers as Comenius Assistants in host schools. The programme's activities are informed by the Lisbon Strategy (European Council, 2000a; European Council, 2000b; European Council, 2007), which is a key education-related policy initiative at European level. The Lisbon Strategy, enacted in March 2000, was intended to make the EU 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' by 2010 (European Council, 2000a, p. 3). The European Council (2000a) concluded that in order to respond both to the challenges of globalisation and to the need for economies to be knowledge-driven, the EU should devise reform programmes for several related areas, including the education system. In the subsequent years this overarching reform agenda has served as the main reference for many related policy initiatives in fields such as teacher education, school cooperation and lifelong learning. Recent policy has provided new drivers for school partnerships.

1.5 Drivers for partnerships

As the Africa Unit (Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010, p. 12) warns, mapping the 'educational landscape for partnerships is a challenging task' in the UK. It is important to identify the components of this landscape so that the key drivers for partnerships can be explored and analysed. A theoretical global driver for international partnerships, which is proclaimed with passion by the sociologist and philosopher Morin, is the need to develop a sustainable future in environmental, financial and social terms. Morin (2011, s.7.10) explains that 'in the plantetary epoch in which we live, we have the same vital problems and the same fatal threats'. He vehemently believes that we have duties to each other, as well as rights. He argues that people across the world should live as one, while respecting the diversity of nations, because 'the treasure of human unity is human diversity and the treasure of human diversity is human unity'. This need to live

as one provides an overarching driver for international partnerships at all levels. At school level, young people can learn the skills of global citizenship that enable them to be stewards of the world for future generations.

At a practical level, drivers for school partnerships can be broken down into two main groups, although there is much synergy between the two. The first group contains those that come from policy and practice in the UK and the second group includes those that arise from the UK's membership of the European Union and from international agreements, such as the Millennium Declaration[9]. Two main aims of the education drivers can be identified. One focuses on the reduction of poverty and on teaching people about the inequalities between nations and the causes of poverty. The other focuses predominantly on the need for nations to ensure that they can compete in a global marketplace. The latter relies on their citizens having sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding so they are well-placed to live and work in a global economy.

1.6 UK drivers for international school partnerships

The UK has a unique position in the world for two reasons. Firstly, it is a member of the Commonwealth, which is a voluntary association of 54 countries spanning six continents. Secondly, it is a member of the European Union, which is a partnership of 27 countries. The British Queen is not only the Head of the Commonwealth[10], but is also Head of State in 16 of the Commonwealth countries, and this creates a wide range of opportunities for the development of multi-faith, multi-cultural, multi-lingual relationships. Developing a school partnership with a school in another country, as the Commonwealth Consortium for Education (2006) points out, is one way of creating opportunities to broaden experiences. The 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers' communiqué in 2009 stated that the:

- *'Ministers stressed the importance of developing and utilising partnerships with a range of stakeholders in order to maximise effectiveness and optimise the use of resources*
- *Ministers agreed to the need for partnerships at all levels*

[9] In 2000, 189 nations made a promise, the Millennium Declaration, to free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations.
http://www.beta.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html

[10] The Commonwealth, as Queen Elizabeth said at her accession to the throne in 1952, 'bears no resemblance to the empires of the past. It is an entirely new conception built on the highest qualities of the spirit of man: friendship, loyalty, and the desire for freedom and peace'.
http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/191086/150757/head_of_the_commonwealth/

- *Ministers endorsed the forum's recognition of the vital role that teachers play and the need to provide them with necessary support structures'.*

(Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011)

Four years after the Millennium Development Goals[11] were initiated to create a more equitable world, two UK nations, England and Scotland, developed international strategies to broaden their people's understanding of the wider world. The English international strategy 'Putting the World into World-Class Education' (Department for Education and Skills, 2004, p. 15) proposed that every school and college should have a sustainable partnership with 'at least one equivalent institution in another country' by 2010, so that 'our young people are equipped to live and work in a global economy'. This created, in the first decade of the 21st century, a positive climate in which programmes that promoted school partnerships across the world, such as the on-line learning community Rafi.ki[12] and Global School Partnerships[13], could flourish. Although a recent study by Bourn and Hunt (2011, p. 10) confirms that there 'has been a major drive by governments to encourage all schools to develop some form of international link and this initiative has had considerable public funding support ', there is little current policy in the UK that explicitly promotes school partnerships, although, for example in Scotland, policy creates a framework which provides ample opportunities for school linking.

In the UK, development education associations[14] lobby government bodies to ensure that the importance of global citizenship in education is fully recognised. England's development education association, Think Global, has undertaken research that has provided some compelling outcomes to support its position. For example, Think Global (2011a, p. 4) indicates that global learning[15] not only enables young people to have the

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[11] http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml
[12] http://rafi.ki/index.php
[13] www.dfid.gov.uk/globalschools
[14] Development education associations came into being in the latter part of the 20th century in order to promote a greater understanding of global issues and development. The national associations include:

- England: Think Global - http://www.think-global.org.uk/ formerly known as Development Education Association (DEA)
- Wales: Cyfanfyd - http://www.cyfanfyd.org.uk/welcome-to-cyfanfyd/about-cyfanfyd/
- Scotland: International Development Education Association of Scotland - http://www.ideas-forum.org.uk/
- Northern Ireland: Centre for Global Education - http://www.centreforglobaleducation.com/

[15] As discussed later in Chapter 3, Think Global (http://www.think-global.org.uk/page.asp?p=3857) define global learning as 'education that puts learning in a

skills for the job market, but also 'is an important driver of high attainment'. Whilst I am not convinced by the second argument, because of the lack of quantitative evidence to substantiate the statements made in the report, there is clear evidence to indicate that the job market values global learning. A report from Think Global and British Council (2011), following a poll of 500 UK chief executives and board level directors in companies with at least 10 employees, states that three quarters of business chiefs fear that the UK will be left behind by emerging countries unless young people learn to think more globally. This finding corroborates an earlier CBI study (Nathan, 2011) of 566 employers that collectively employ 2.2 million people, which found, as mentioned above, that well over half of the employers (61%) considered international cultural awareness among school and college leavers to be insufficient. The latter report makes it clear that business leaders see global education for young people as vital if the UK is to compete in the global economy. Surprisingly, a recent study of university students carried out by YouGov in conjunction with British Council (Ellison and Gammon, 2011, p. 26) indicates that slightly less than half (48%) of the students surveyed[16] thought that having an international outlook would affect their employment prospects, but the majority (78%) did consider it was important from a personal perspective. An Ipsos MORI survey (2009b) of 598 11 to 14 year olds using face-to-face interviews found that the great majority (93%) of young people concurred with this latter viewpoint and thought that it is at least *fairly* important to learn about the issues affecting the lives of people in different parts of the world, with 46% thinking it very important. A survey of 481 parents of children under 18 (Think Global, 2011b, p. 8) found that the adults' views were in accordance with that of the school children, as almost three quarters wanted their young people to 'think globally' and 'be responsible global citizens'. A further piece of research from Think Global (Ipsos MORI, 2009a, p. 10) highlights a difficulty at school level since 'only 42% of teachers say they feel confident teaching about how emerging economies have an increasing impact on the way we live and work in the UK'. In the light of this growing body of research, as Think Global and British Council (2011, p. 7) point out, 'it is not surprising that four-fifths of businesses (80%) think schools should be doing more than they are currently doing in this area'. In summary, recent research highlights the need for the UK workforce to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to live and work in a global economy as a potential key driver for raising global awareness. The process of acquiring a global awareness provides ample opportunities for the promotion of school linking, but until the research is embedded in policy its impact is not maximised.

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global context'.

[16] The study involved four focus groups and 1000 online surveys.

Another potential driver for school partnerships in the UK has recently been provided by the DFID, following a review by the Central Office of Information (COI) of the value of raising awareness in the UK of the issues facing developing nations and the reduction of poverty, as part of the UK's pledge to the Millennium Development Goals. Based on the outcomes of this review, Stephen O'Brien, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development stated that the evidence linking 'development awareness projects [....] and poverty reduction is not strong enough to satisfy our rigorous criteria for development impact', but there 'is a reasonable causal chain that can be used to justify future investment', since 'positive public opinion encourages positive actions such as donating money' (O'Brien, 2011, p. 63). This approach is supported by evidence provided by Think Global (DEA, 2010, p. 6), which indicates that there is a close link between learning about global issues in school and support for aid spending. In fact 'only a third (35%) of people who did not learn about global issues in school support the spending commitment, but this rises to over half amongst those who learnt about poverty or world politics and trade in school (52% and 53% respectively)'. Since the 2002 International Development Act requires that aid money spent in the UK contribute to the reduction in poverty in developing nations, only government spending that 'can play a positive role in building awareness of global poverty' (O'Brien, 2011, p. 64) can be considered. O'Brien (2011, p. 64) used the COI review to demonstrate that there have been 'notable successes of working through the formal education sector, by integrating the global dimension into the school curriculum'. He also confirmed that the development education work in schools would continue, and links between schools in the UK with similar organisations in developing countries would continue to be supported. The aim would be that:

> *'every child growing up in the UK should learn about the world around them, about the bald facts of poverty and underdevelopment which face children their own age in other countries, about the potential of trade, wealth creation and economic development to build a freer, more prosperous world. By working through the formal education system DFID will target the next generation of the UK workforce.'*
>
> (O'Brien, 2011, p. 64)

DFID has therefore offered a powerful driver for school partnerships, but it relies upon the nations' departments of education to embrace the vision and make its success a reality.

A key aspect of the educational landscape in the UK is the focus on raising standards of achievement[17]. Sir Michael Wilshaw (Ofsted, 2012b, p. 4), as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in England, is determined to 'raise expectations' and ensure that the nation's children, young people and adults get the 'best possible education'. He has initiated a 'drive to improve the quality of teaching, because good teaching is at the heart of a good education' (Ofsted, 2012b, p. 4). This approach to raising standards in education is in accordance with Wiliam's (2009) view that variability in achievement between classes is not due to class size, or to between-class or within-class grouping strategies, but is due to the teacher. Raising standards of learning is predicated on raising the quality of teaching, and relies on professional development of the workforce. Neither raising standards nor increasing teachers' expertise is a driver for international school partnerships, but school partnerships may provide a mechanism that will assist in achieving these aims.

School practice, both in mainstream and the independent sector, is policed by inspection frameworks[18] that are used to evaluate the provision of education in schools. The inspection framework incorporates, for example, the quality of the curriculum and any other legally required duties, such as the promotion of community cohesion, although this is not now overtly specified in England. The wording of the frameworks has a powerful impact on school practice, and consequently the frameworks have the potential to be strong drivers. The UK nations have different inspection frameworks and these provide an insight into each department of education's priorities. These are discussed in greater detail below.

1.6.1 England

Both the inspection frameworks for schools and the requirement to promote community cohesion are currently important drivers for school partnerships in England. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Her Majesty's Government, 2006) placed a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion, which the Church of England's National Society (2011) explains involves developing 'an appreciation of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances'. The duty came into effect in September 2007 and from September 2008 Ofsted inspected

[17] Achievement 'takes account of pupils' attainment and their rate of progress, together with the quality of learning and progress by different groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs'(Ofsted, 2012a).

[18] In England there are several inspection frameworks arising from the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Her Majesty's Government, 2006), for example, the Section 5 framework for mainstream schools, and the Section 162a framework for small independent schools.

schools' contributions to promoting community cohesion. The chair of the cross-party Commons education committee, Graham Stuart, warned in October 2010, that 'Ofsted's remit would no longer include checking schools were promoting community cohesion', (Shepherd, 2010). The new January 2012 inspection framework (Ofsted, 2011c) does not contain an overt requirement to make a judgment on the school's contribution to promoting community cohesion. However, the 2012 grade descriptors (Ofsted, 2011b) for the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the quality of education provided by the school include the 'promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development *[that]* enables them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community'. In practical terms this means that it is the outcomes of activities to promote community cohesion that form part of the judgement, rather than the activities themselves. Thus the inspection framework still provides a driver for the development of a cohesive community in which spiritual, social and cultural differences can be appreciated. International school partnerships remain a vehicle to achieve this outcome.

The removal of the inspection of schools' promotion of community cohesion is likely to have little impact on the educational landscape for international school partnerships, as its potential as a driver for school linking was not maximised, as indicated by Phillips, Tse, Johnson and Ipsos MORI's (2011) research. Their study found that 70% of the schools surveyed had developed partnerships with another school (or schools) with a different demographic profile as a way of promoting community cohesion, but while most links had been developed since the duty became a statutory one, only a few (5%) had used their overseas links with partner schools to promote community cohesion. I believe that this was a missed opportunity to develop international school partnerships, because, from personal experience, in some predominantly white areas of England there is limited opportunity to provide first-hand meaningful experiences of diversity for children. School partnerships with schools in other parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and India through programmes like Global School Partnerships[19], offer a way of addressing this difficulty. A worried headteacher (Owen, 2007) of a small rural Church of England school, explained the problem in detail. She found that parents and children did not arrive for the trip on the day of a planned outing to a mainly Muslim primary school and a mosque in a nearby town. The headteacher said that the parents were so fearful of meeting Muslims that they had boycotted the trip. The idea of a school partnership, where a relationship can be nurtured over time, was seen by the headteacher as a way forward in developing an understanding of diversity and an appreciation of difference.

[19] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/get-involved/in-your-school/global-school-partnerships/

The impetus provided by the 2004 international strategy appears to have become somewhat dissipated as other issues take priority, for example the urgent need to raise the standard of education. A current review of the curriculum in England is an inclusive, but extended process, the outcomes of which will not be enacted until 2014[20]. The current absence of clarity over future curriculum issues has left a void, which, in my experience, has meant that some school leaders are averse to taking risks in developing new initiatives that may fail to have a place in the new curriculum. Whilst the curriculum driver for school partnerships in mainstream schools may be a casualty of the process of the review (since at this time there is no longer clear guidance to promote a global dimension in the English school curriculum), the freedoms given to academies and 'Free Schools' to design their own specific curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils (Department for Education, 2012) offers good opportunities that can be developed by non-governmental drivers, such as British Council or BBC World Class (see Table 1-1, p.22). The International Baccalaureate, which Think Global (2011a) points out highlights the central role that global learning plays, may become a driver in the future. Until the curriculum review has been completed there is little policy to drive international school partnerships in England, though there are many non-governmental organisations, such as British Council and Think Global, which are taking a strong lead.

In contrast, the Higher Education Funding Council for England does provide clear support for international partnerships, as seen in the 2011 strategic plan that states it will 'promote international partnerships in education, research and knowledge exchange' (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2011, p. 14). Bourn, McKenzie and Shiel (2006, p. 41) clarify the importance of an international dimension in the curriculum, particularly within higher education, by arguing that 'learning which includes a global perspective addresses more effectively the employability agenda: 'employability' is on the agenda of every HEI[21], with 'global employability' an important goal'.

1.6.2 Wales

In Wales the picture is somewhat different. In October 2011 the Education Minister (Wiredgov, 2011) launched a new International Education Programme (IEP) that

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20 http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum/a0075667/national-curriculum-review-update

21 Higher Education Institution.

promotes learning through international partnership activities that include:

- international school linking
- joint curriculum projects
- language learning
- international professional development
- raising awareness of the Welsh language abroad
- skills development.

The activities of this new initiative support the delivery of the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship[22] agenda. This approach encompasses the whole curriculum and management of the school, and links environmental education with development education in order, as stated by the National Assembly for Wales, to meet 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Welsh Government, 2011). This provides a clear driver for international school linking and adds credence to projects such as Wales Africa Community Links[23], and to the activities of charities such as Dolen Cymru[24], which has formed many longstanding links between schools in Wales and Lesotho.

The Welsh Baccalaureate provides strong support for the development of an international dimension with the core unit 'Wales, Europe and the World', as seen particularly in the cultural issues section where active participation is encouraged. This provides another potential driver for school linking, which is reinforced by the Welsh school inspection framework's evaluation of the Welsh Baccalaureate (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), 2010a). Estyn also provides further drivers through the inspection guidance (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), 2010a; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), 2010b) that evaluates the promotion of good relationships, for example, by asking some of the following questions:

- *'How tolerant are pupils of others' beliefs, cultures and backgrounds?*
- *Do different aspects of the curriculum enable pupils to reflect on life in other cultures and contribute effectively to developing their awareness of cultural diversity?*
- *Are pupils able to recognise and do they increasingly understand a diversity of beliefs, attitudes, and social and cultural traditions?'*

[22] Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship is underpinned by environmental education and development education. It links society, economy and the environment, both locally and globally, to meet the needs of the present and also future generations: http://www.esd-wales.org.uk/english/side/what_is.asp

[23] http://www.walesafrica.org/volunteer.html

[24] www.dolencymru.org

(Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), 2010b, p. 3)

1.6.3 Scotland

In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence is a key driver for developing global awareness and, through its focus on active learning, international links are seen as a way of developing 'a global perspective, where partnerships support the curriculum and help sustain a whole school vision' (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2011, p. 20). The Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2010, p. 55) has 'an important role in supporting children and young people to recognise and value the variety and vitality of culture locally, nationally and globally'. Learning a modern foreign language is seen to afford 'opportunities for interdisciplinary work by providing a global dimension to a variety of curriculum areas and, particularly, to the areas of active citizenship and cultural awareness' (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2011, p. 176). The underlying driver appears to be the nation's prosperity, as indicated by the importance attached to ensuring that young people are 'well equipped with the skills needed in the new Europe and in the global marketplace' (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2011, p. 172). This aligns with the Scottish Government's (2008) International Development Policy.

The new inspection frameworks that were introduced in August 2011 complement the approach provided by the Curriculum for Excellence. Rather than the provision of a report following an inspection, the findings are posted on the internet in the form of a letter to parents that include, for example, for independent schools[25] areas such as:

- How does the school ensure consistently high standards for all?
- How does the school continue to improve?

For maintained schools the areas covered include:

- How well do young people learn and achieve?
- How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

Although aspects differ between the independent and maintained school inspection frameworks, each provides the opportunity for practical experiences, including the development of an awareness of global issues, to be evaluated. The flexible approach enables noteworthy contributions to the education provision to be cited, for example in one recent publication[26] the Comenius programmes were seen as providing valuable opportunities for employment and training. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in

[25] These are drawn from the independent schools' inspection framework.
[26] http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/inspection/BalernoCHS5541638.html

Scotland (2011) highlights the engagement of young people with global issues and, building on the previous framework, identifies 'leading-edge practice' (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, 2007, p. 18).

The Scottish Government, as outlined in its International Development Policy (2008), provides funding for the Malawi Development Programme that supports a variety of partnerships between Malawi and Scotland, including school partnerships through the Scotland Malawi Partnership Programme. This provides a resource to support the Curriculum for Excellence and consequently is a strong driver for international school partnerships.

1.6.4 Northern Ireland

Until recently there were few clear drivers for international school partnerships in Northern Ireland. The curriculum now offers some positive opportunities for international partnerships. For example, the Department of Education Northern Ireland's curriculum statutory rules state that there will be learning for life and work, which includes global citizenship, so that young people can 'investigate the impact of the global market on Northern Ireland and *[..]* reflect on the implications for their personal career planning' (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2007, p. 57). The curriculum sets the scene for partnerships at the primary level with the area of learning focusing on 'The world around us', and at Key Stage 3 with 'Local and Global Citizenship'. The recent policy (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2011) aimed at improving relations between communities and valuing equality and diversity provides a good driver for partnerships. It highlights the importance that the subject 'Local and Global Citizenship' will play in exploring the range and extent of diversity in both local and global societies and aims to:

> *'Educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the on-going intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society'.*
>
> (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2011, p. 23)

How effectively school leaders and managers plan strategically to ensure equality of access, to foster good relations and to meet the diverse needs of learners and staff in the pursuit of a high quality provision for learning is evaluated under the school inspection framework (Education and Training Inspectorate Northern Ireland, 2011).

Although this is not a driver for international partnerships itself, it defines the landscape that clearly does not preclude international linking.

1.7 European drivers for international school partnerships

The Council of the European Union (2011, p. C 70/2) in its conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the 'Europe 2020[27]' strategy stresses the importance of 'improving the responsiveness of education and training systems to new demands and trends, in order to better meet the skills needs of the labour market and the social and cultural challenges of a globalised world.' There is the acknowledgement that the European public must be informed about development issues in order to be able to engage critically with global development. This is necessary both to support development policy but, more importantly, to participate in creating the future relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. As Reid et al. (2009, p. 11) point out from their research:

> *'Although some individuals may have innate abilities, or prior experience that make it easier for them to work with cultural diversity, the overwhelming message of the literature is that specific competencies need to be acknowledged and developed'.*

The Council of the European Union (2010a, p. 137/7) had earlier recognised the importance of promoting and supporting 'greater participation of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those with special needs, in transnational mobility schemes, partnerships and projects'. The opportunity to travel to different countries and share in partnerships and projects when at school, I contend, is very important because, as Reid et al. (2009, p. 11) argue, the 'first step in developing intercultural effectiveness is simply to be aware that cultural diversity exists and thus to take steps to anticipate it through preparation'. The need for schools to work together across different countries is further emphasised by the European Union's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) proposals (Council of the European Union, 2010b, p. 327/13) that promote:

[27] Europe 2020 is the EU's ten year growth strategy and incorporates five objectives focusing on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy. Each Member State has identified is own national targets in each of the above areas http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

'networking between educational institutions on the issue of ESD, making optimum use of existing networks and strengthening cooperation on ESD at all levels by building partnerships, including by encouraging [..] national and cross-border cooperation among schools'.

These compelling drivers from Europe are backed by substantial funding for educational partnerships through a variety of programmes, including Comenius, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci, as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, and others, such as the Europe for Citizens and Youth in Action.

The European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity[28], also known as the North-South Centre, has as one of its objectives the promotion of global education practices through shared learning of global education fundamentals, which incorporates collaborative partnerships between the Council of Europe's member states and Southern countries. Although this does not solely focus on school partnerships, opportunities are provided to showcase and learn from successful school partnerships, for example through the World Aware Education Awards.

1.8 Global drivers for international school partnerships

The United Nations' (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide an excellent framework within which school partnerships can develop. The second MDG focuses on the achievement of universal primary education for all. Protagonists for school linking argue it can support MDG 2, as partnerships can raise the standard of education at a local level, can improve attendance of students and staff and provide a global dimension to the curriculum. For example, Edge et al.'s (2010a) work for a schools' programme run by Plan UK indicates that of those surveyed in the partnership schools in Malawi[29] 95% agreed that students' motivation had improved, 90% agreed that attendance had risen since the beginning of the partnership, and 78% agreed achievement had improved. The same survey found that in the Chinese partnerships, 86% of those surveyed in the 47 Chinese schools agreed that their partnership had increased the school's focus on global issues. Increasingly research is demonstrating, as seen in Edge et al.'s work, that school partnerships can deliver meaningful support for development as well as raise awareness of development issues. Consequently, I

[28] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/GE/GE_Form_ACT3_2007_en.asp

[29] The survey analysis is based on 42 schools that responded to the survey out of a possible 56. The response rate was therefore 75%.

believe that the UN MDGs can be seen to constitute a significant driver for international school linking.

1.9 Summary of drivers for international school partnerships

The review of the educational drivers for international school partnerships reveals a number of common goals that link the UK nations. The curriculum in all four countries includes to a greater or lesser extent a focus on developing tolerance of and an appreciation of different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds. In some cases there is a strong emphasis on improving relationships between different communities within the nation, in others it is more about providing the next generation with good skills to be able to work in a global economy. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is seen as an important element in educational provision in England. All nations state that their young people should be aware of global issues.

The following tables identify the main drivers for international school partnerships in the UK. These are two broad categories:

- Key drivers: these have a direct impact on schools and other educational institutions, for example the UK nations' departments of education.
- Proxy drivers: these play a significant part in creating a positive landscape for school partnerships.

The categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, DFID does not have a direct impact on schools in the same way as do the four nations' departments of education, but is it is seen as a key driver because of its influential role within government. Some proxy drivers lobby government, thereby driving change for policy and practice. Other proxy drivers arise as a result of policy and practice, for example certain qualifications, or they provide an input into decision-making, such as research. . Websites for the organisations and qualifications listed below are found in Appendix 5.

Table 1-1: Examples of the main drivers across the UK

Key drivers and proxy drivers	Across the UK
Commonwealth Secretariat	17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011)
DFID	Confirmation of the continuation of support for global school partnerships (O'Brien, 2011)
European drivers e.g.	Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010)

	European Commission: Education and Training - Lifelong Learning Programme (European Commission, 2011)
International qualifications e.g.	International **Bac**calaureate: International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)
Research e.g.	Ipsos MORI (2009a; 2009b); NFER (Sizmur et al, 2011); Think Global (2011a; 2011b); Think Global & British Council (2011); YouGov (Ellison and Gammon, 2011)
UK organisations: e.g.	Achievers International
	British Council - e.g. Comenius, Connecting Classrooms, E-Twinning, International Schools Award
	BBC World Class
	Childreach International - **My school, my** voice
	Development Direct Global Partnerships
	Eden Project - Gardens for Life
	Global School Partnerships
	Intuitive Media
	The Japan Society
	Link Community Development
	Link Ethiopia
	The Motse Project
	One World Link
	Pahar Trust
	Rafi.ki
	Sabre Trust
	Sound Affects
	UK-German Connection
	UKOWLA
UN Millennium Development Goals	Providing a framework within which school linking can support development issues particularly for MDG 2.

Table 1-2: Examples of the main drivers in the nations of the UK

Key drivers and proxy drivers	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Departments of education	**Curriculum** flexibility for academies and 'Free Schools' (Department for Education, 2012) Community Cohesion (Department for Education, 2011)	International Education Programme, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (Welsh Government, 2011)	Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2010)	Curriculum – Primary 'The world around us' & Key Stage 3 Local and Global Citizenship (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2007; Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2010a; Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2010b) Community relations (Department of Education, 2011)

Development of a modern foreign language	✓	✓	✓	✓
National qualifications with specific links to global learning e.g.		Welsh Baccalaureate		
National organisations: e.g.	Think Global	Cyfanfyd; Dolen Cymru; Wales Africa Community Links	IDEAS; Scotland Malawi Partnership	Centre for Global Education
School inspection e.g.	Some support: 2012 inspection framework: spiritual, moral, social and cultural: cohesive learning environment (Ofsted, 2011b; Ofsted, 2011c)	Supportive: Estyn guidance (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), 2010a; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), 2010b)	Some support: August 2011 inspection frameworks (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, 2007; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, 2011)	Limited support: (Education and Training Inspectorate Northern Ireland, 2011)

Chapter 2. Appraising literature to define terminology, inform methodology and refine the research questions

The research questions that shape my thesis have been refined by the learning from the literature review. In this chapter, I discuss the literature that informs my study and I explore my own theoretical perspective before defining the research questions.

This literature review does not concentrate on a discrete body of knowledge, but rather encompasses a wide range of disciplines, for example educational theory (Godoy *et al.*, 2008; Grigorenko, 2008; Serpell, 2008), business management, organisational theory (Senge, 1990), intercultural behaviour (Byram *et al.*, 2004; Reid, 2009a) and development education (Bourn, 2008a; Bracken and Bryan, 2010).

In an approach similar to that adopted by Reid (2009b, p. 3) in which he synthesised 'theory and evidence from a number of fields in order to propose a practical model of learning', this study constructs a model based on a review of literature. However, my outcome will not be a series of competences, but rather a standard rooted in theory and practice against which international school partnerships can be evaluated. The literature review will not only assist in defining some of the terms used in the research, but will also provide an understanding of outcomes from earlier studies that can be used to inform the methodology for this study and assist in the framing of the research question.

2.1 Structuring the literature review

The way in which a literature review is to be structured, Boote and Beile (2005, p. 3) declare, is a key decision that needs to be taken at the beginning of any study, since a 'substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review is a pre-condition for doing substantive, thorough sophisticated research'. These authors point out that without gaining an understanding of the literature in the field it is not possible for the research to be 'cumulative', which they describe as 'building on and learning from prior research and scholarship on the topic' (Boote and Beile, 2005, p. 4). In this current study the review is used to develop a theoretical standard and the structure of the literature review and the manner in which the bibliography has been selected are highly

important factors. A poorly conceived literature review will result in an unrepresentative standard.

The impact of school partnerships has only recently become a focus of critical evaluation. In 2006 a small consortium[30], of which I was a member, was commissioned by DFID to undertake a research project to evaluate the impact of school partnerships from both the UK schools' and the partners' perspectives. As indicated by the authors of the final report, Edge et al. (2009b, p. 31), at that time there was 'little – in fact, no - research literature on international school partnerships'. Their literature review, as described in their first year's report (Edge, Freyman and Ben Jaafar, 2008), indicates that they had included areas covering educational reform, including school improvement and leadership, local authority reform, and north- south partnerships in general. This was the first study of its kind and, I believe, constitutes what Hart (1998) describes as the 'relevant, key landmark' (p.219) study. Since 2008, other works, such as Ewington, Reid, Spencer-Oatey and Stadler (2009), Leonard (2008), Gallwey (2010) and Martin (2008), have been written about school partnerships and some further research (Bourn, 2011; Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Reid, 2009a) has been undertaken, but the quantity of relevant literature remains small.

I have used bibliographical analysis to identify a range of relevant material for this study. As Hart (1998) indicates, this can be done in three phases. The first phase involves the construction of bibliographical lists that are obtained from books dealing with the subject. Reports were included at this stage. The second phase entails identifying relevant journals and searching abstracts of journal articles. The third phase applies to theses and conference papers. I added a fourth phase that entails scrutinising the bibliography of relevant courses. The searches for the documentation in each phase involved:

- electronic databases, such as those provided by the Institute of Education[31]via the ProQuest platform, such as the British Education Index, the Australian Education Index and ERIC[32]
- search engines such as Microsoft Academic Search, Google Scholar and JANET[33], the UK's education and research network
- scrutinising websites, such as those on Think Global[34] and pursuing materials referenced on those sites.

[30] The consortium comprised Cambridge Education Foundation, Institute of Education, London University and UK One World Linking Association.
[31] Institute of Education, University of London
[32] Education Resources Information Centre
[33] www.ja.net

The references associated with each document or online article were logged and checked to identify any new sources. These in turn were skim read and their references were noted. Several programmes engaging in international school partnerships were identified and the literature associated with these programmes was scrutinised. Materials, such as unpublished Masters dissertations, theses, conference papers, online articles and web-based tools were identified, as well as journals, reports, books and three online courses. All these were used, as Hart (1998, p. 31) suggests, in the 'construction of a map of the literature' that enabled the 'operation of a non-partisan stance' to be adopted.

2.2 Clarifying terminology

Baker (2011, p. 199) points out that 'languages are adapted and shaped to the needs of the individual'. The way in which we individually construct our understanding is dependent upon our context. As Baker suggests, language 'influences our perception of the world but it does not restrict it' (2011, p. 198). However, our ability to share the nuances of our individualised interpretations is both influenced by and limited by our language proficiency, and it is this limitation, I believe, that can lead to misunderstandings. Vygotsky's (1978) work on social development theory demonstrates the fundamental role that social interaction plays in constructing meaning. For him, psychological tools, such as language and writing, emanate from context and culture, and are used to mediate the social environment. Not only do these tools have to be learned, internalised and practised, they are fundamental in the development of cognition[35]. Language is both a liberator and an inhibitor, and in the case of a study such as this one, defining meaning is paramount in order to avoid arguments that revolve around the detail of the language used rather than the methodology applied and the outcomes achieved.

2.2.1 Clarifying 'successful'

The first term to be clarified is 'successful', which in this study is limited to school partnerships and is intended to be a universal approbation. As indicated in the above discussion, the construction of an understanding of what 'successful school partnerships' means is dependent on its context and the theoretical perspective adopted. Andreotti (2006) uses a post-colonial perspective to articulate her discomfort

[34] www.Think-global.org.uk

[35] This seems to me to be in stark contrast to Piaget's view that an individual's development precedes learning.

at the aims of certain school links, whereas Bourn (2008b, p. 14), from a development education theoretical perspective, looks at the 'relationship between learning, action and social change'.

A number of the reviewed works, such as Edge et al. (Edge *et al.*, 2010a); the African Liaison Program Initiative (2006) and Oxfam's 'Building Successful School Partnerships' (2007) refer to successful partnerships, but do not clarify what this actually means and from whose perspective. The Oxfam (2007, p. 4) paper provides a list of elements of successful school partnerships that includes:

- *'Commitment to an equal partnership*
- *Commitment to partnership learning through the curriculum*
- *Effective communication*
- *Good whole-school practice in Education for Global Citizenship'.*

This list provides an insight into what a successful partnership might include, but it fails to define what is meant by the term 'successful'. Sternberg (2008, p. 6) assists by clarifying, in his theory of successful intelligence, that the 'skills and knowledge needed for success in life [are], according to one's own definition of success, within one's own sociocultural context'. This accords with my own experience and is supported by school partnership documentation, for example Global School Partnership's Partners in Learning (2007b). Having worked with school partnerships for over eight years, I have found that in order for a partnership to be deemed 'successful', the link has to be perceived as successful by all its stakeholders. This means that where a partnership spans different continents, cultures and faiths, all involved must share in the perception, although the interpretation of the perception will vary. For example, one partner may see their partnership as being successful because the agreed objectives have been met, whereas the other partner may view the partnership as successful because of unanticipated outcomes, such as the development of friendships or the development of new pedagogical skills. Since the social context affects the way in which the partners and the other stakeholders, such as parents, community members and funders, construe the word successful, if one group involved in the partnership does not rate it as successful, then overall it cannot be seen as such. There is no system of weighting applied to the participants and stakeholders. They are all equal. It is helpful to consider UKOWLA's (2007, p. 4) definition of a successful link, which is one that:

- *'increases knowledge and understanding of global issues*

- *broadens and deepens knowledge about other countries*
- *develops friendships and feelings of solidarity with others*
- *enables us to learn about self in relation to others'.*
- *strengthens the local community and challenges narrow and distorted ideas about other races and cultures'.*

These are pointers for success. However, UKOWLA's guidance, based on practical experience, is aimed at supporting successful global relationships. It is not an evaluation framework, and therefore it cannot be said that partnerships that do not exhibit these characteristics are not successful.

The Comenius programme's measurements of success for its school partnerships are the outputs, outcomes and also, where attributable, the impact. Achieving success in terms of outputs relates to meeting specific targets for which the project can be held to account, for example the numbers of mobilities[36]. Success, in terms of outcomes, is dependent upon fulfilling the objectives defined in the grant application form submitted three years previously. The assessment of the applications is a rigorous process involving an international moderation forum and includes clear guidance for the assessors. The assessors of the final reports have on-line training (British Council, 2011), which focuses on the match between the proposed and the actual outcomes and additional guidance (British Council, 2009). Over time, the programme has moved away from assessing success merely in terms of outputs and now it also evaluates the projects' outcomes and their longer term impact, though the final assessment[37], which is carried out by independent assessors, is of the project report rather than the project itself.

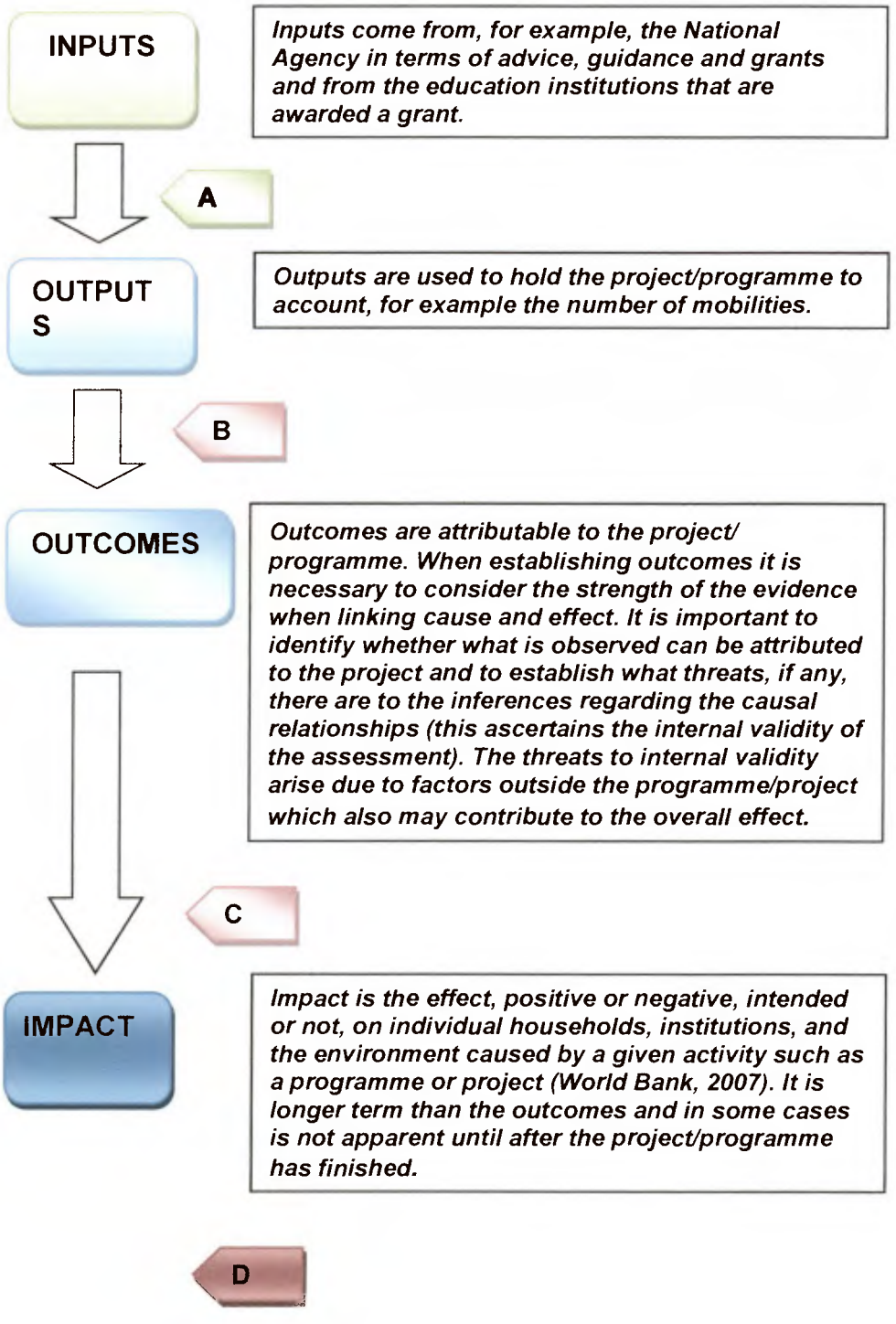
2.2.2 Clarifying input, output and outcomes

It is important at this stage to define the terms input, output, outcomes and impact used above. These terms are in regular use by a very wide range of organisations, for example government bodies, schools, hospitals and businesses. Each term's meaning may vary with context. Using materials from a variety of sources, including an in-depth two-day course on impact evaluation (Tobin, 2012), World Bank (2007) and the new Independent Commission for Aid Impact (2011), I have constructed the diagram below and added markers A to D showing the points at which the project might be evaluated.

[36] A 'mobility' is a return journey to an overseas (non-UK) partner school by a student or staff member of the school/college (European Commission Education and Culture Lifelong Learning Programme, 2012, p. 4)

[37] See Appendix 1 for the final report assessment form.

Figure 2-1: The Comenius project journey



Key points for evaluation:

A: the delivery of the supply inputs

B: the implementation of the project as determined by the outputs

C: outcomes that are attributable to the project

D: assessment of impact after the project has been completed.

At each key evaluation point the criteria for success are likely to be different, but the definition of 'successful partnership' given above still applies; provided it is perceived by all parties to be successful, then it should be deemed to be so. To summarise, defining the term 'successful' in the context of school partnerships relies on the practical rather than the theoretical, and relates to a favourable outcome for all.

2.2.3 Clarifying 'partnership'

Another term that requires clarification in terms of this study is 'partnership'. The Global School Partnerships programme (2007a, p. iii) defines a partnership as a 'relationship where two or more parties, having common and compatible goals, agree to work together for a particular purpose and/or for a particular length of time'. The European Commission for Education and Training (European Commission, 2011) concur with this. Other organisations, such as UKOWLA that 'shares good practice for global partnership links' (UKOWLA, 2011) and aims 'to create relationships between diverse cultures which benefit both parties' (UKOWLA, 2007, p. 4) use the term linking rather than partnership. DFID, in its review of the use of aid funds to promote an awareness of global poverty (Department for International Development, 2011), refers to links 'between schools and hospitals in the UK with similar organisations or groups in developing countries'; whereas the Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell, often uses the term 'twinning', for example 'GSP[38] supports twinning between schools in the UK and those in the developing world' (TheyWorkForYou.com, 2011). Although at the start of the Global School Partnerships programme in 2003 different groups of practitioners were keen to establish the differences in the terminology, the intensity of this debate has now lessened. Suffice to say that a partnership between schools in the context of this study is one in which a relationship is developed between the parties rather than one which is bound by a formal legal arrangement.

Throughout the study the term 'school' refers to all types of educational establishments for those of compulsory school age, and includes colleges catering for young people aged 16 to 18 years old, and early years settings, such as nurseries. The term 'school partnerships' is taken to mean any twinning or linking between educational institutions for pupils and young people up to the age of 18.

[38] Global School Partnerships

2.2.4 Clarifying the intended goal for Comenius

It is also important to clarify, for this study, the intention of the goal for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, in order to identify the drivers for the Comenius school partnerships. The European Union's goal of becoming an 'advanced knowledge-based society' (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2006, p.45) encompasses, for me, three distinct aspects that need to be considered: advanced, knowledge-based and society. The last two concepts are potentially more straightforward, despite the complexity of the philosophical arguments surrounding the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, and the concepts of society. The European Commission's economic strategy (2010), which aims to increase the level of knowledge in the workforce by improving the quality of education, concurs with Locke's (1690) view of knowledge. Their view supports the argument advanced in Chapter 1 and links knowledge with experience. Locke explains that the way in which 'we come by any knowledge, *[is]* sufficient to prove it *[is]* not innate'. If we accept that knowledge is gained through experience, as opposed to being innate, then learning is an integral part of the acquisition of knowledge. Hargreaves and Goodson (2003, p. 6) propose that a 'knowledge society' is a learning society. This view is shared by Honey (2000, p. 1), who clarifies the meaning of learning by indicating, simply, that when it has occurred 'people can demonstrate that they know something they didn't know before'. He points out that facts, insights and realisations are 'examples of learning that fall into the knowledge category' (p. 2) , but, sadly, he does not go further to explain what, if any, instances there are of learning that do not fall into the knowledge category.

The European Commission views information and communication technologies as important components of the knowledge category providing drivers for its digital society. Although the strategy refers to society it does not clarify its meaning. A contemporary view of the term is used by the UK Coalition government in their drive to promote a 'Big Society'[39], which is taken to mean 'the families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities that form the fabric of so much of our everyday lives' (p.1). Theories of social capital highlight that 'our social relationships and our learning are closely interrelated' (Field, 2007, p. 164) in a variety of complex ways. This concurs with Vygotsky's (1978) argument referred to above (Section 2.2). Field (2007) points out that research confirms that people's social networks influence their capacity for accessing new information, skills and ideas, and conversely learning influences people's social connections. Presumably, from the context in which 'advanced knowledge-based society' is used, the knowledge system is Western and the society is

[39] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/building-big-society_0.pdf

European. It is acknowledged, but will not be pursued, that such an assumption could lead to extensive debate as to whether Western educational theory is the most appropriate and whether European society is one homogenous entity or whether, as suggested in the Parekh Report (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000) which focused on the UK, our society might be 'both a community of citizens and a community of communities' (2000, p. 2). Honderich (1995, p. 836) assists by defining society as a 'sphere of causal and moral self-sufficiency lying between the political and the personal'. The latter accords with my understanding, as it allows for differences and similarities to be encompassed in an interlinked relationship of peoples functioning at a variety of levels. The interpretation of the concept of 'advanced' depends on the context in which it is used. For example, it can be used to denote a higher level, which might be applied when describing skills or the degree of development. In other situations it can signify a more complex or sophisticated entity, or something that is more innovative or cutting edge. In this study it is taken to mean innovative, because of the European Commission's focus on 'innovative ICT-based content' (European Commission, 2011).

2.2.5 Clarifying 'global learning'

Finally, 'global learning' is a term that, in the past, has been subject to differing interpretations by government departments, academics and non-governmental organisations. Now there is a greater consensus, and a widely accepted concise definition offered by Think Global[40], as mentioned previously, is that global learning is 'education that puts learning in a global context'. This encapsulates some of the skills required for global citizenship, as described by Oxfam (1996), such as an ability to think critically, creatively and understand global issues and to deal with the problems arising from inequalities of power in relationships; to be tolerant, self-aware and broadminded; and to have the motivation to engage in making the world a better place. This understanding of global learning will be adopted in the study.

2.2.6 Clarifying a consequence of inequalities

The section above refers to the difficulties caused by inequalities of power in relationships. This links to Andreotti's (2006) point in Chapter 1 that highlights the impact of unequal relationships. In my experience, the balance of power in a school partnership and the quality of the debate about the power relationships are critical to the outcome. Sharp (2009, p. 110) explores the perpetuation of the colonial power relationships into the post-colonial era, and points out there is a 'shift in attention from

[40] http://www.think-global.org.uk/page.asp?p=3857

focusing on the economic and political operations of power that allowed western countries to rise to dominance, to understanding the power involved in the continued dominance of western ways of knowing'. Sharp explains the impact that this has on perceptions, including self-perception, because 'the networks of power through which western forms of representation of the world circulated, *[...]* influenced not only how 'they' were known by 'us', but also how 'they' were persuaded to know themselves' (Sharp, 2009, p. 110). If, as Sharp contends, the 'western ways of knowing - whether this be science, philosophy, literature, or even popular Hollywood movies - have become universalised to the extent that they are often seen as the only way to know' (Sharp, 2009, p. 110), then the result, which accords with my observations, is that other systems used to construct knowledge and understanding are marginalised.

The foregoing discussion illustrates, briefly, the importance of considering language and its interpretation, and this applies not only when undertaking the review of literature, but also when analysing the qualitative data from the Comenius school partnership programme. Reid et al (2009) point out that different meanings attributed to terminology, not only by those of different cultures, but also by those from the same culture, are likely to result in a lack of clarity within a working relationship. If differences in understanding arise between people speaking the same language, the potential for misunderstanding is even greater for intercultural teams working in different languages. The approach to language, as highlighted by Ewington et al. (2009, p. 12) in their review of a Chinese-UK e-learning programme, is 'particularly critical in forming strong initial impressions'. Stadler and Spencer-Oatey (2009, p. 15) warn that 'judgements as to how appropriate a given type of behaviour is are highly context-dependent and culture-bound', while Baker (2011, p. 197) offers a caution 'that the use of English as a global lingua franca *[...]* raises challenges concerning how we understand the relationship between languages and cultures in intercultural communication'.

2.3 Informing methodology

Two main studies provided significant input for my methodology. The first is the work by Edge and her team (Edge and Freyman, 2009a; Edge, Freyman and Ben Jaafar, 2008; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b). This work was the first attempt to evaluate global school partnerships, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The research arose out of the need to demonstrate the outcomes of school partnerships in an environment in which sceptics, such as Burr (2007) referred to above, were becoming increasingly vocal about the damaging impacts that partnerships can cause. This piece of research, for which I co-wrote the proposal and chaired the management group,

evaluates school partnerships in a number of different school partnership programmes and encompasses schools in the UK[41], in eight African nations[42] and three Asian countries[43]. The study's large scale quantitative survey of 800 schools in the UK and 800 in Africa and Asia, coupled with its qualitative study of 55 school-level partnerships makes it unique in this field of research. By means of interviews, focus groups and observations, the research team (Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b, p. 108), 'drew out the shared story of the partnership' and mapped the 'emerging patterns that have built momentum and a track record of success'. Using six partnerships they developed criteria for what they call 'high momentum' partnerships (Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b, p. 108). These criteria have been refashioned using the literature review to form a starting point for the development of the theoretical standard.

The second study is a more recent impact assessment of global school partnerships by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) (Sizmur *et al.*, 2011). Once again this was a large scale UK-focused study for DFID. The NFER research involved 8,519 pupils and 284 teachers in the four UK nations.

When Edge and her team (2008; 2009b) embarked on their research they found there was no literature on international school partnerships to assist in the development of their methodology, and consequently they resorted to looking at 'several wider areas of research and theory to develop the conceptual framework to guide this research' (Edge, Freyman and Ben Jaafar, 2008, p. 17; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b). Their research aim was to 'attribute any co-relational factors to the perceived success/failure of a partnership' (Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b). They were the originators of the research methodology that helped me define the conceptual framework for the quantitative first phase and the subsequent qualitative phase of the present study. Their conceptual framework incorporates inputs, such as partnership design and school demographics, within school factors, such as school organisation and leadership models, and perceived impact by groups, such as students, teachers and the community. They anticipated that 'the emergence of possible trends in the data [...] would suggest that particular partnership development strategies *[would]* lead to more positively received partnerships' (Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b, p. 32). In theory the framework enables cause and effect to be linked, but in practice it would seem from the final report that the quantity of data collected exceeded the capability for analysis within the timeframe. The all-encompassing framework fails, in my opinion, to

[41] All four UK nations were included.
[42] These were Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda and Zambia.
[43] These were India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

deliver compelling evidence to answer their research questions. While I understand the desire for outcomes to be linked to provision in order to determine the salient factors in successful partnerships, I am not convinced that, in practice, such a model is viable, because of the large number of independent variables that impinge upon the outcomes and areas of impact and over which the researchers have no control.

Despite my reservations about Edge et al.'s framework, a detailed consideration of the model helped me to reflect on what constitutes success in a school partnership. Should an outcome driven partnership be considered successful because it meets its objectives in terms of outputs, or is the overall impact of the partnership the salient factor? Or perhaps there is a specific aspect of impact, such as the creation of sustainable relationships between the members of the partnership that is the essential element? In Subsection 2.2 Clarifying terminology above, the term 'successful' was defined as something that resulted in a favourable outcome for all. Within the context of individual partnerships, success will be interpreted differently, and between the members of the partnerships, the construction of the meaning will be individualised. Therefore, I concluded that neither identifying the 'when' in a partnership journey, which ranges from the process of setting up the partnership to the final stages of measuring outcomes and assessing impact, nor defining the 'what' that should be evaluated was meaningful. Success, in this study, is to be determined by the partners at whatever point and for whatever aspect of the partnership they consider relevant.

Edge's team (Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b), in their second year of the study, visited 54 schools in Africa, Asia and the UK. By means of interviews, focus groups and observations, they 'drew out the shared story of the partnership' (p. 108) and mapped the 'emerging patterns that have built momentum and a track record of success' (p.108). Using six partnerships they developed the criteria for what they call 'high momentum' partnerships (p.108). These criteria include (p.108):

- *Partnership formation*
- *Support and training*
- *Leadership and management*
- *Connection to school structures*
- *Partnership objectives*
- *Communication between partners*
- *Student/teacher and staff/community involvement*
- *Curriculum initiatives*
- *Monitoring and evaluation.*

In my study these criteria form the starting point for a classification framework for the literature review in the development of the theoretical standard.

The second study (Sizmur *et al.*, 2011) by the NFER team differed from Edge et al.'s work (2008, 2009a, 2009b) in that only the UK schools' perspectives were taken into account. The viewpoints of the southern partnership schools were not included. The aim of the research was to assess the impact of Global School Partnerships on levels of global awareness and attitudes to global issues of pupils in schools involved in the programme. The NFER method included an on-line questionnaire and case-study visits. Only the Global School Partnerships programme was reviewed, unlike Edge et al.'s study in which a number of different programmes were included. The outcomes from the survey of Global School Partnerships schools were then compared with those from a control group of similar schools. As a member of the advisory panel for this research, I found the concept of creating a 'control' group for comparative purposes particularly challenging, especially as I have a background in scientific research. However, the research team were not daunted by this apparent difficulty and identified schools with similar demographics by means of a random sample. My reservations revolve around a methodology that relies on finding schools that have little global awareness in order to identify how effectively a particular programme delivers global awareness. I consider that the nature of the counterfactual (which some may call the 'control' group) can skew the results in a major way and therefore render the outcomes unreliable. For example, if the 'control' group of schools were monocultural and news was not discussed, the comparative outcomes would differ considerably from those where the control group had schools with a multicultural population and strong spiritual, cultural, social and moral teaching.

An earlier study had alerted me to the problems of using a control group. The research, carried out for DFID in 2006 by Creative Research (2006), aims to identify the impact of a twenty-six year community partnership between the towns of Marlborough, Wiltshire and Gunjur, Gambia. It compares Marlborough's residents' views with those of people in similar towns that had no partnerships. The authors acknowledge that demographic information about the towns was not considered fully. This undermined for me the value of the study, as I do not understand how Marlborough could be effectively compared with control towns, if the demographics of each are not fully understood. Reviewing my reservations has helped to develop further my critical lens when interrogating research and consequently has informed my method of development of the theoretical standard.

Despite my concerns, the NFER study has provided me with important social metrics in the form of outcome measures. These have been helpful in framing my understanding of measuring aspects of impact and their analysis that has assisted in the construction of the framework for both my quantitative and qualitative work. The integration of the mixed method approach involving survey and case–study data, has also informed my methodology. Through factor analysis of the pupils' responses to 102 attitude statements, 13 factor scales were developed. These fell into three broad categories, which include:

- Awareness factors that showed how much pupils felt they knew about global issues, such as social justice and interdependence
- Attitude factors that showed pupils' attitudes to different global issues, such as human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship
- Response factors that showed pupils' 'critical reflections about the impact of their global learning' (Sizmur *et al.*, 2011, p. 2).

The concepts underpinning the factor scales have been incorporated into my qualitative analysis.

The integration of the mixed method approach, involving survey and case–study data, has informed the methodology of my study, and the concepts underpinning the factor scales developed by the NFER team have been considered when developing the qualitative analysis.

2.4 My position as a researcher

It is important at this stage of my study to explore my theoretical perspective, which is rooted in objectivity, in order to define more precisely my research questions that were identified in Chapter 1.

Although my earlier work (Cook, 2011) comes from a post-positivist stance (Crotty, 2009; Popper, 1959; Popper, 1974; Popper, 1983), I find myself increasingly in sympathy with a critical realist viewpoint (Groff, 2004; Scott, 2005). Post-positivism persuades me that, although I will not be able to establish a universal truth, quantifying my outcomes provides a well-tested process for validating the theoretical standard. Critical realism, which Groff (2004, p. 23) describes as 'realism about causality, in conjunction with the social character of knowledge', encourages me to reflect judiciously on those outcomes and to acknowledge that the external world does not necessarily exist for others in the way that I perceive it. Therefore, when reflecting on the outcomes, I need to understand the perceptions of those involved in the study and

their world. I believe that objectivism, tempered by a 21st century perspective in which knowledge is only ever partial and the only certainty is change, provides a compelling epistemological perspective for this study.

My methodology make links between the constituent parts of a partnership and success, and my methods consider success from different viewpoints. If 'successful' is socially defined rather than being a given truth, the quality of school partnerships can, I believe, be most effectively evaluated through a 'best-fit' approach rather than a criterion-based schema. Critical realism enables a pragmatic approach to be adopted, so that a series of measurable success criteria using a 'best-fit' model can be compiled into an evaluation schedule that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative information. The evaluation schedule defines the overall quality of Comenius school partnerships and is aligned with the theoretical standard. The approach is supported by Danermark et al.'s (2002, p. 15) argument that the nature of the relationship between knowledge and the object of knowledge is defined by language and therefore conceptualisation, which suggests that 'knowledge is indeed fallible and open to adjustment'. They add 'not all knowledge by far is equally fallible' (Danermark *et al.*, 2002, p. 15), which concurs with my own experience (Cook, 1976).

2.4.1 My paradigm

The choice of analytical methods for my study depends on the 'theoretical moorings' (Crotty, 2009, p. 41) underpinning my methodology. My literature review has already revealed some of the 'theoretical moorings' that form my paradigm. Hamilton's (1992, p. 21) description of a paradigm as a 'set of interconnected ideas, values, principles and facts which provide both an image of the natural and social world, and a way of thinking about it', emphasises for me the importance of evaluating one's own set of assumptions when embarking on research. How I think about the world will affect the way I study it.

An objectivist epistemology of knowledge propounds, as Crotty (2009, p. 8) says, that 'meaning, and therefore meaningful reality, exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness'. Quantitative data arising from the Comenius final reports are the bedrock of much of my study. The empirical data, such as the age of learners that categorises the institution's educational phase, are based on verifiable observations in which a value-neutral, systematic and objective approach has been adopted by, for example, the departments of education. I hesitate here, because I believe that not all of the quantitative data arising from the Comenius final reports is based on verifiable information. For example, the scores for the level of impact, awarded by the authors of

the final reports and based on their observations, may not be replicated by external evaluation. Although, ontologically, I believe that realities do exist outside the mind, from personal experience I find a truly objective approach to observations, particularly those involving social as opposed to natural science aspects, is unattainable. This concurs with Popper's (1974, p. 342) view which he elaborates in his 'bucket' theory of knowledge that 'observation is a process in which we play an intensely active part .... which is planned and prepared.' He argues that an observation is preceded by a question or a particular problem, and concludes that therefore observations are always selective. The selection procedure may be constructed by the researcher relying on their own perspective, or may occur as a rational progression arising from earlier experiments. Constructs, such as the theoretical standard for successful school partnerships, are implicit in my methodology.

As Scott (2005, p. 637) indicates researchers 'cannot avoid entering into a critical relationship with previous and current ways of describing the world' and, consequently, generating what he terms the 'internal critique'. This critical perspective is, I believe, person specific, as it relates to the way in which each individual creates knowledge within the social world. For me as an observer, I find that I construct, and, indeed, deconstruct, an observation in order to assimilate the information, 'thereby entering into a relationship with reality itself and possibly changing it' (Scott, 2005, p. 637). This viewpoint, which Scott argues is not solipsistic, enables me to value both quantitative and qualitative work, seeing them as complementary elements in developing the 'understanding of the agency/structure relation'[44] (Scott, 2005, p. 637) underpinning my reality. Danermark et al.'s (2002, p. 15) argument that 'reality has an objective existence but that our knowledge of it is conceptually mediated' promotes the recognition that the quantitative scores for impact are author-specific and need to be set within the context provided by the associated qualitative information. It also raises for me an important epistemological question about the compilation of the secondary data from the final reports, which leads me to evaluate the processes applied in assessing and grading the final reports. Goff's (2004, p. 133; Scott, 2005) point that 'the fact that social phenomena are meaning-laden has no significant bearing on whether or not they are caused' strengthens my reliance on the authors' self-evaluations, but still leaves me seeking ways to confirm the data using other sources.

I believe my perspective provides me with a strong framework that supports an empirical study that is thorough and replicable. I acknowledge that I cannot render the

[44] Scott (2005) identifies agency as the ability of individuals to act independently , having their own 'unique intentions and beliefs' (p. 639) , and structure as limiting factors that influence or inhibit 'agents' activities' (p.639).

framework completely value-neutral, but I have endeavoured to limit the effect of my perspective by using a wide variety of information from different sources to enable the findings to be triangulated or cross-checked. The outcomes from my quantitative and qualitative analysis provide, albeit according to Popper's argument provisional, answers to my research questions.

2.5 The research questions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are two research questions that steer this study:

1. What are the indicators of a successful school partnership?
2. To what extent do UK Comenius partnerships demonstrate success?

The first question incorporates the development of a theoretical standard based on a review of current literature and the second question aligns the outcomes from the Comenius school partnership programme with that standard.

2.5.1 What are the indicators of a successful school partnership?

This apparently simple question encompasses a range of complex issues, such as the interpretation of success from different perspectives of a range of stakeholders and in different contexts. The term stakeholder is intended to cover all partners and any organisation involved that is providing support, whether that be funding, professional development, or guidance.

In a similar vein to Tharp and Dalton's (2008, p. 53) question 'Is there a dominant transnational school orthodoxy' my first research question asks whether there is a dominant transnational orthodoxy for successful school partnerships? This overarching question will be broken down into three other questions:

- Can a theoretical standard be proposed for successful school partnerships?
- If so, does that theoretical standard encompass indicators that are universal for all multicultural partnerships and for all partners in the partnership?
- What are the drivers in the UK in 2011-12 that provide a rationale for developing successful school partnerships? Do the outcomes identified by the drivers align with the components of the theoretical standard?

2.5.2 To what extent do UK Comenius practitioners' evaluations of their partnerships' success align with the theoretical standard?

This question provides the structure through which practice can challenge theory. The question comprises a number of separate aspects that need to be considered:

- To what extent do the Comenius programme's indicators of success align with the theoretical standard?
- Do the self-evaluations of the UK participants in the Comenius programme align with the outcomes from the literature review?
- To what extent do the Comenius school partnerships demonstrate success?
- To what extent does the Comenius school partnership work demonstrate an impact on the delivery of the curriculum?
- What are the perceived obstacles to achieving a successful partnership?
- Do the findings from analysis of the Comenius data support or negate the universality of the theoretical standard?

Chapter 3. Methodology and its contribution to the construction of the theoretical model

My thesis aims to provide a standard against which school partnerships can be evaluated, and to use it to evaluate the quality of school partnerships from the Comenius EU Lifelong Learning programme. The testing process will involve matching perceptions and outcomes from Comenius school partnerships against those identified in the theoretical standard. Applying the theoretical standard to assess practice also enables the validity of the standard itself to be evaluated.

The study comprises three contiguous stages, the first of which is to compile the theoretical standard based on a large survey of current literature that focuses on international partnerships. The second stage provides a context for the findings from both the first and third stages, by evaluating the national drivers for school partnerships against the theoretical standard. An outcome from Stage 2, subsequent to the completion of Stage 3, is an evaluation of the extent to which the Comenius programme demonstrates an impact on the delivery of any key areas identified in the review of the national educational drivers. The third stage is the analysis of the secondary data provided by the Comenius schools in their final reports following completion of their 2008-10 projects. Although, it may perhaps be more usual to undertake the evaluation of a programme and then consider its context, I have chosen to reverse these two stages in this particular study, because the theoretical standard and the summary of the educational landscape are transferable elements that can be applied to other evaluations. I believe presenting them concurrently is a valid approach in this case as it facilitates their extraction for other programmes.

The analysis in Stage 3 identifies key variables to be extracted, collated, computed and evaluated in order to assess whether the theoretical standard is applicable to this programme. The evaluation, against the theoretical standard, of data derived from reports provided by participants in the Comenius programme enables theory to be challenged by practice. It provides an assessment for British Council of the qualities of Comenius school partnerships when compared with those qualities identified in the literature review as being important for successful international school partnerships. It is at this stage that the value of the theoretical standard is considered.

My study employs a mixed methodology that involves both quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative textual analysis. My conceptual framework, as discussed above, is informed by an objectivist epistemology of knowledge that propounds that a reality already exists prior to any study, which does not preclude negotiated understanding of information.

The methodology can be visualised as shown in the diagram below:

Figure 3-1: A theoretical standard for successful school partnerships

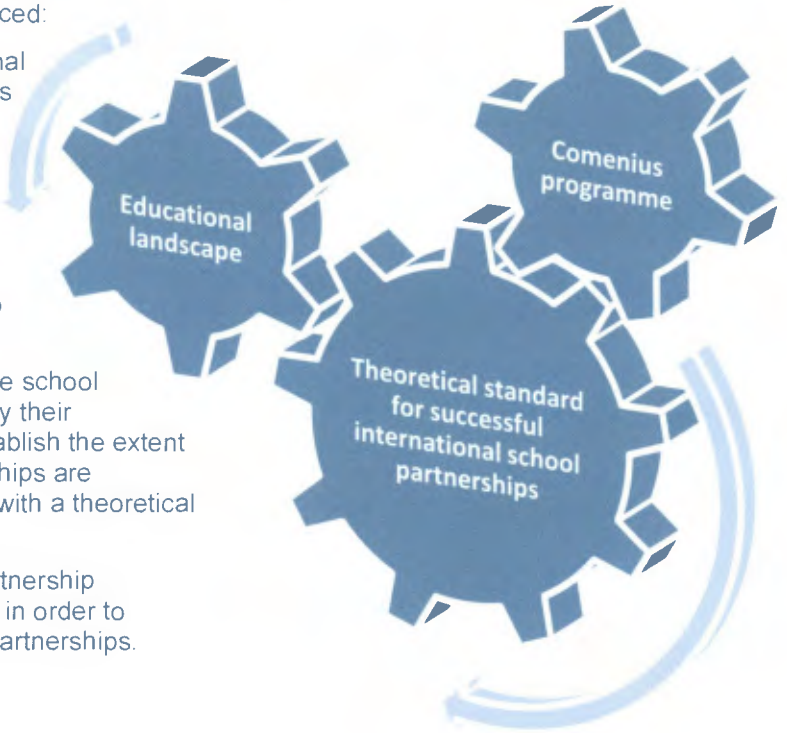
The theoretical standard provides a comparator against which the following can be mapped and cross-referenced:

1. UK key drivers for international school partnerships and key issues
2. the Comenius programme's Indicators that incorporate:

a. success criteria, in order to see how effectively it aligns with other global partnership programmes

b. outcomes and impact from the school partnerships, as assessed by their coordinators, in order to establish the extent to which Comenius partnerships are successful when compared with a theoretical global standard

c. the language used by the partnership coordinators in their reports, in order to ascertain the quality of the partnerships.



3.1 Methodology: Stage 1

The first stage of the study encompasses:

- An extensive literature review of over 80 papers and books that identifies the core characteristics of successful links or partnerships in a variety of international programmes. The review elicits both theoretical and empirical criteria for successful partnerships. The participants' perceptions of the constituent parts of a successful partnership provide important evidence.
- The development of a theoretical standard, comprising the components identified in the literature review, for successful school partnerships.

- Operationalizing the theoretical standard in order to provide a practical tool for comparison.
- A separate literature review that assesses the opportunities within the different UK education systems for programmes that promote multinational school partnerships. This information provides the context for the school partnership programmes, although it may not necessarily capture all the national drivers for such initiatives.

3.2 Methodology: Stage 2

The second stage of the methodology builds on Stage 1 and incorporates the outcomes of Stage 3. It comprises:

- A comparison of the literature review's criteria for successful school partnerships and the four nations' key educational drivers in 2011 for school partnerships, in order to determine to what extent the UK's educational priorities align with the theoretical standard for successful school partnerships This information will provide both the context for the theoretical standard and a comparator against which to evaluate its universal nature. It is not possible to prove that the theoretical standard is universal, but by evaluating the standard against a comparator, which in this case is a summation of key national drivers for school partnerships, it will be possible to discern whether it is a useful common tool at this time or whether it falls at the first challenge.
- Identification of how closely the contextualised national / UK regional priorities are aligned with the theoretical standard.

Having evaluated the alignment of the theoretical standard with policy, a contextualised benchmark for successful school partnerships is created, which can be used by UK government school partnerships programmes, by Comenius schools in their self-evaluation and by the National Agency, British Council, which runs the Comenius programme in the UK. This stage provides the context for the final evaluation of how closely the qualities of Comenius partnerships match the theoretical model. If, for example, the context were found to be very supportive of school partnerships, it might be argued that there would be an expectation that, even if the Comenius programme's objectives were not aligned with the standard, the key national drivers for school partnerships would influence the schools sufficiently to have an impact on the quality of the Comenius partnerships, and therefore context must be taken into account. A review of the alignment between the national drivers for school partnerships and the theoretical standard is critical in providing a final link between the outcomes of the

Comenius school partnerships, as assessed by the institutions' partnership coordinators, and the delivery of any key areas identified in the review of the national drivers for school partnerships. The theoretical standard becomes the medium for comparison.

3.3 Methodology: Stage 3

The third stage of the methodology involves a detailed analysis of secondary data derived from the Comenius schools' final reports of projects that were completed in 2010. This entails an in-depth review of the final reports in order to identify and extract relevant information for analysis. The extracted data is analysed to determine whether the Comenius' programme's information has sufficient synergy with the theoretical standard in order for matches to be made and comparisons to be evaluated. The testing process involves mapping the variables and evaluating the matches. In this way the qualities of the Comenius partnerships are evaluated against a standard that has been developed using a wide range of international partnerships.

The third stage comprises the following steps:

- The use of a literature review that provides key information to guide the design of the research methods.
- A review of the criteria for successful partnerships as defined by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Comenius. This provides the context for the Comenius reports.
- Mapping the Comenius criteria for successful partnerships onto the theoretical standard in order to ascertain to what extent the programme aligns with the literature review's perception of successful school partnerships. This provides the context for the Comenius programme in the international school partnership landscape.
- A review of the Comenius report template in order to identify those questions that are most likely to provide data that can be used to match and compare the Comenius programme with the theoretical standard.
- A review of a sample of hard copy reports in order to ensure that all relevant questions have been selected and to evaluate the type of information provided by the schools in response to the selected questions. Detailed examination of the content is necessary at this stage, because the data comes in a variety of forms, for example extended text and also graded variables on drop-down lists.

Also required is a careful exploration of how the selected data can be extracted electronically from the whole reports.

- Analysis of Comenius data in order to provide a compilation of variables that are mapped onto the operationalized theoretical standard (hereafter referred to as OTS). Factors affecting the success of the partnership, as perceived by the participants, are isolated. The initial focus lies with those factors that make the process of partnership development effective and lead to successful partnerships. The outcomes for UK schools from participating in successful Comenius partnerships are then identified using both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Analysis of obstacles that prevent either effective participation in Comenius partnerships or the development of successful school partnerships.

3.4 Ethics

There are few ethical issues associated with this research as it is based on secondary data and a literature review that is already in the public domain. The sources of the secondary data are UK institutions that are participating in the Comenius programme. They have given British Council their permission to store their details on their database and to utilise this information to review procedures, improve the delivery and demonstrate how the programme is meeting its key performance indicators. British Council has given me permission to work on the database by providing me with access to the database. The database does not reveal any information about individual participants, but relates only to individual institutions. The cases are only known to me by their numbers and not by the institutions' names. None of the institutions are identified by name in this study and all information at institution level will remain confidential.

British Council has given me permission to do this work as part of my doctorate. Confidential terms of reference are in place that cover the scope of the work, the approach to be taken, the deadline and the ownership of the information. My doctoral studies are used as a basis for a report to British Council. This report is confidential to the sponsor. The findings are communicated in a clear and easy-to-understand style. As the researcher, I am a disinterested party, and there is no conflict of interest between my role as a professional and as a researcher. The Ethics Approval for this study has been granted (see Appendix 20).

Chapter 4. What are the indicators of a successful school partnership? Developing and operationalizing the theoretical standard

A wide range of literature has been assembled, drawn from government programmes, such as DFID's Global School Partnerships, from programmes run by non-government organisations, such as Plan UK, from programmes undertaken by higher education institutions, such as the University of Warwick, and from independent authors commenting on the theory and practice of school partnership programmes. Comenius programme documentation has not been incorporated into the initial literature review, for two reasons. The first is that Comenius partnerships tend to be output focused, for example with objectives to ensure that an agreed number of visits are made. The Comenius literature provides little guidance about the quality of successful partnerships, and more about meeting the aims of the agreed project. Secondly, I considered it is important to maintain the independence of the Comenius material from the theoretical standard in order to be able to use it to test whether the theoretical standard is useful in practice.

The literature review not only provides the content for the theoretical model, it also provides guidance as to how such a model might be constructed. The Edge et al. (2009b) extensive study of school partnerships in the UK and in the South resulted in a very large quantity of data being gathered. This required a 'framework for scaling the different components of the case studies' (2009b, p. 42). I used their methodology, as discussed in Chapter 3 to inform the way in which I structured the framework for the theoretical standard. Their study and mine are similar in that both incorporate very large quantities of data and need a flexible framework that can be stratified by constituent themes, but also incorporate the emerging trends. This flexibility is essential for the assimilation of a wide range of information into a single template. The strategy that is used to identify relevant works, as described in Chapter 3 above, is organic and it continues to captures new and pertinent studies.

The reviewed literature on international partnerships falls into two main categories. The first comprises guidance on how to create a successful partnership. The work in this group is based on good practice as perceived by practitioners based in the UK and

also in other countries, such as The Netherlands and Australia. It encompasses schools, higher education institutions, health and faith-based partnerships. Authors share their experiences and provide support for others embarking on a partnership. There is a plethora of corroborative advice (for example, from (African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006; Building Understanding through International Links for Development, 2007; Global School Partnerships, 2007b; Oxfam, 2007) that indicates that partnerships should be equitable, reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Other writers in this first group, such as Reid et al. (2009b), evaluate a partnership in depth in order to elicit a framework of competencies for international partnerships. These are particularly helpful in identifying the constituent parts of a successful school partnership. This category of literature relates to the process of partnerships, rather than the outcomes from partnerships.

The second and much smaller body of literature includes research that considers all partners' perspectives and provides both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the outcomes and the longer-term impact of partnerships. It is this body of research that provides the insights into partnership working from all participants' viewpoints and identifies important partnership components. Edge and her teams have provided important evaluations of two different school partnership programmes that link schools in the UK with schools in the southern hemisphere. The first team, Edge, Freyman, Ben Jaafar and Lawrie (Edge *et al.*, 2010c; Edge, Freyman and Ben Jaafar, 2008; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b) evaluated a government funded global school partnership programme, while the second team, Edge, Creese, Frew, Descours, Professor Guo Hua, Kabugo, Sannoh, Suswele and Kalanda assessed the impact of a non-governmental organisation's school partnership initiative (Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010b; Edge *et al.*, 2010c; Edge *et al.*, 2010d; Edge *et al.*, 2010e). A dominant finding from both Edge's teams' work is the importance of mutual development, where 'the work of each school informs and leads further work in the partner school' (Edge *et al.*, 2010d, p. 5), but the authors warn that this is difficult to achieve because it requires good communications and understanding between the parties. Kerr et al.'s (2011, p. 5) findings indicate that school partnerships are more likely to be sustainable if 'conscious attempts are made to embed the learning and outcomes across the school curriculum and to link the learning to other Local Authority programmes and initiatives'. Edge et al.'s (2009b) research forms a major reference in developing an understanding of successful school partnerships. Their studies of school partnerships programmes in the UK (Edge and Freyman, 2009a; Edge, Freyman and Ben Jaafar, 2008; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b) indicate that potential indicators of successful school partnerships include:

- Whole school and wider community involvement
- Increased skills, motivation and achievement of those involved
- Contribution to whole school strategy that includes evidence showing the extent to which the work demonstrates an impact on delivery of curriculum goals/national education agendas.
- Sustainability even beyond project funding period. This includes, for example, evidence showing how the partnership evolves and continues through other programmes such as eTwinning.
- Key skills that are transferable and can be used in other areas/links with other countries.

Ellerman's (2008) study emphasises the importance of the partner organisation being seen as an autonomous learning organisation. Equality between the partners is a recurring theme for success. Successful partnerships, Ellerman (2008, p. 24) points out, will not develop where southern partners are treated as 'repeater stations or missionary outposts for the 'Correct Messages being sent from the center'. Wanni et al. (2010, p. 11) emphasise that partnerships between schools in the north and schools in the south are 'often characterised by the existence of asymmetries between the two partners at a number of levels, which include resources, capabilities, and most significantly power'. Despite differences in the levels of resourcing, successful partnerships must resolve the power differences. From my work I have found, as has Oxfam (2007), that it is the way in which the imbalances in resources and the power relationships are negotiated that mark out, from all participants' perspectives, a successful partnership, and consequently, post-colonial theory that explores different forms of power relationships is a part of my theoretical perspective. Wanni et al. (2010, p. 11) concur that exploration of power differences is an essential part of the partnership formation process.

4.1 Constructing a theoretical standard

In order to model a theoretical standard for successful school partnerships, a framework for classification was constructed using, in the first instance, the factors contributing to 'high momentum partnerships' that were identified by Edge et al. (2009b, p. 108) in their extensive study. A flexible framework was constructed using an Excel workbook comprising spreadsheets for each of the main criteria, for example:

- How the partnership was created
- What support and training were in place

- What forms of communication the partnership employed.

Each criterion encompassed sub-criteria that were not pre-determined, so that as each new piece of literature was reviewed new sub-criteria were added. Although the main groups in the classification did not increase, the number of sub-groups did, as each author provided a different perspective. Similar sub-groups were amalgamated. For example, training, acquisition of knowledge, reflection and learning were all grouped together as one sub-group in the professional development category. The value of working in this way is that as other literature becomes available the categorisation framework is sufficiently flexible to be able to incorporate new findings, but it also has a well-defined structure that promotes a meaningful classification based on empirical studies. Literature from the second group referred to above was also evaluated and outcomes were similarly classified using the framework. An opposing argument, which was substantiated by evidence, was included in the analysis and is shown in italics as '*Contrary*' in the following table.

Table 4-1 Theoretical Standard: Partnership Formations

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
1: Partnership formation	Early exchange visits	(Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010b; Edge *et al.*, 2010c; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; IDEAS, 2010)
	Clear purpose	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b) *Contrary (Edge et al 2010; (Martin, 2011)*
	Mechanism to negotiate the relationship, including: • incorporating mutuality, reciprocity & respect • resolving power differences • frequency of communication • willingness to learn from and respond to the outcome of reviews	(African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006; Alcock, 2010; Bourn, 2011; Burr, 2007; Edge *et al.*, 2010b; Ellerman, 2008; Oxfam, 2007; Reid, 2009a; Reid, Stadler and Spencer-Oatey, 2009; Stern, Heaney and Britton, 2009; UKOWLA, 2007; Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010)
	Personal connections	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; IDEAS, 2010)
	Supportive external organisation	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Supportive leadership	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Whole-school involvement in the decision-making process	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)

Table 4-2: Theoretical Standard: Partnership objectives

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
2. Partnership objectives	Broadening horizons	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Enhancing the curriculum, for example: • shared teaching of lessons • wide range of subjects included • special events planned • global dimension incorporated across the school • mutual collaboration of shared work • planning time to enable prejudices to be explored	(Bonnell *et al.*, 2010; Department for International Development, 2007; DGSP, 2007; Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010d; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Kerr *et al.*, 2011; Kotler, 2010; Oxfam, 2007)
	Fundraising/ charity	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Incorporated in school development plan	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Answering questions	(RORG-network, 2006)
	School improvement	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Sharing a vision	(African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006; Kotler, 2010)
	Student & teacher learning	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Supports school's aims	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)

Table 4-3: Theoretical Standard: Leadership & Management

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
3. Leadership and management	A commitment to work to a shared set of values	(Department for International Development, 2007)
	Active senior leadership team support	(Bonnell *et al.*, 2010; Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010e; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Enabling 'smart working' to achieve a number of goals through one piece of work.	(Bonnell *et al*, 2010)
	Joint development of action plan	(Department for International Development, 2007; Oxfam, 2007; Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010)
	Management of a global dimension audit	(Oxfam, 2007)

	Partnership agreement	(Stern, Heaney and Britton, 2009)
	Ownership -shared ownership among partners and the communities they serve	(African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006)
	Roles and relationships agreed and stated	(Global School Partnerships, 2007)
	Strong leadership that evaluates itself and is participatory, reflective	(African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006; Department for International Development, 2007; Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Kotler, 2010; Leonard, 2010; Stern, Heaney and Britton, 2009)
	Strong staff support – ensuring sustainability	(Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Kotler, 2010; Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010)
	Student/ parental support	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Student participation at all levels	(Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010e; Stern, Heaney and Britton, 2009)
	Transparency of decision-making and mutual accountability	(Department for International Development, 2007; Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010)

Table 4-4: Theoretical Standard: Support & Training

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
4. Support and training	External support	(Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Oxfam, 2007)
	Funding	(Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Kerr *et al.*, 2011)
	Governing body support	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Professional development: acquisition of knowledge and development of awareness: support for reflection and learning	(Alcock, 2010; Bonnell *et al.*, 2010; Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Greenholtz, 2003; Kerr *et al.*, 2011; Martin, 2007; Oxfam, 2007; Reid, 2009a; Reid, 2009b)

Table 4-5: Theoretical Standard: Communications

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
5. Communication	Planning for and developing effective communication skills, including increasing/developing: • self-awareness • cultural knowledge • language proficiency • openness • flexibility • inclusive ethical approach	(African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006; Bonnell *et al.*, 2010; Crompton, 2010; Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010b; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; IDEAS, 2010; Kotler, 2010; Oxfam, 2007; Reid, Stadler and Spencer-Oatey, 2009; Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010)
	Exchange visits	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Wanni, Hinz and Day, 2010)
	Incorporating perspectives from the partnership country	(Fricke and Krause, 2011; Reid, Stadler and Spencer-Oatey, 2009; RORG-network, 2006)
	Overcoming limited internet communication	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Student-to-student communication	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Using a variety of communication methods	(Edge *et al.*, 2010a; Edge *et al.*, 2010b)

Table 4-6: Theoretical Standard: Whole school involvement

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
6. Whole school involvement	Community involvement	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; IDEAS, 2010)
	Creating teams for specific activities	(Oxfam, 2007)
	General involvement of staff	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Edge *et al*, 2010; Oxfam, 2007)
	Opportunities to raise confidence and self-esteem	(Bourn and Hunt, 2011)
	Student exchange	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b)
	Teacher exchange	(Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Edge *et al*, 2010)

Table 4-7: Theoretical Standard: Monitoring & evaluation

Components of successful school partnerships	Sub-components	References
7. Monitoring and evaluation	Formal monitoring and evaluation	(African Liaison Program Initiative, 2006; Edge, Freyman and Lawrie, 2009b; Gallwey, 2010)
	Assessing educational impact	(Kerr *et al.*, 2011; Oxfam, 2007)
	Cost-effectiveness	(Kerr *et al.*, 2011)

Although the characteristics of the 'high momentum' partnerships identified by Edge et al. (2009b, p. 108) formed the backbone of the theoretical standard, they have been extended and reshaped, with some characteristics being amalgamated and others being developed into a separate category. For example, as can be seen in the tables on the preceding pages, the final component of successful school partnerships 'monitoring and evaluation' has had two further categories added to complement Edge et al.'s (2009b) 'formal monitoring and evaluation'. In the 'communications' component, the first sub-component has been broadened from Edge et al.'s work, which focused mainly on the variety of different communications methods, such as telephone conversations and texting, to encompass planning for effective communication, which includes a consideration of the way in which understanding is constructed. This aspect is incorporated, for example, in Oxfam's (2007, p. 8) guidance on partnerships, where they state that effective communication 'is key to the success of a partnership. People from different cultural backgrounds communicate in different ways, so that even where the same language is used, use and interpretation differ.'

To summarise the discussion above, the theoretical standard encapsulates two categories of literature that identify different aspects of partnerships. The first category relates to the process of creating partnerships and identifies which approaches build successful partnerships. The second category is research-based and examines the outcomes and the longer-term impact of successful partnerships and identifies what are the essential constituents in a successful partnership. The process model is suitable for guidance, but in developing a theoretical standard the outcome model that takes account of all the partners' views is the key driver. The reason for prioritizing the outcome model, as discussed earlier, is that a successful partnership is one in which all the stakeholders perceive it to have been advantageous. The compenents of the theoretical standard will not come as a surprise to many practitioners, but as Leadbeater (2011, p. 4) points out when describing the core components of the emerging census on innovation in education, although the 'elements of this consensus

will strike many people as little more than common sense', this consensus is not yet fully recognised by the wider public.

4.2 Operationalizing the theoretical standard

The theoretical standard developed in the literature review above is too cumbersome in its current form to be used in practice, because of the large number of variables. In order to operationalize this theoretical standard the classification framework has been rationalised and the constituent parts of a successful school partnership have been grouped together. As noted, it is not only the factors themselves that are important, but also the relationships between them that are significant. In order to capture the emerging complex picture of the partnership components and their intricate inter-relationships, the model must be dynamic and capable of change. One way to visualise this concept of a theoretical standard is to use the analogy of cogs in a mechanical watch. Cogs were used in diagram 5.1 above to illustrate the use of the theoretical standard as a means of providing a common measure for the indicators and outcomes of a partnership programme and for the educational drivers in the UK.

Figure 4-1: Cogs

Looking inside a mechanical watch we can see that cogs are dynamic and work together to transfer energy from one point to another. Each cog is dependent on the others in order to run smoothly. No cog is necessarily more important than another, even though some may be larger than others. This is analogous with the components of a partnership. There needs to be a point of entry for energy, which in a watch is the winding mechanism and in my study is the driver for the partnership.

Each core component of the theoretical standard is represented by a cog and the qualitative indicators derived from the sub-components in the theoretical standard form the teeth of the cog. For the mechanism to function effectively the spaces between the moving parts are as important as the cogs themselves. As will be seen later in the study, these spaces are the relationships that govern or destroy partnerships. The

mechanism, in a similar way to a partnership, requires maintenance in order to balance the constituent parts.

In order to identify the cogs and the teeth, the literature review was systematically categorised in a new spreadsheet as shown in the excerpt below:

Table 4-8: The references supporting the 'Communication'

References	Communi-cation: general	Exchange visits	Persepct-ives from the South	Overcom-ing limited internet communi-cation	Student-to-student	Variety of communi-cation methods
(Edge, 2009b)	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Kotler 2010	✓					
Oxfam 2007	✓					
Edge 2010d	✓					✓
Edge 2010	✓					✓
RORG 2006			✓			
Fricke			✓			
Cromton 2010	✓					
Bonell 2010	✓					
Wanni 2010	✓	✓				
ALPI 2006	✓					
IDEAS 2011	✓					
Reid 2009	✓		✓			
Total	**11**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**2**

'Student-to-student communication is present in all but one of our high momentum partnerships' pg 116

Each marked cell has a referenced quote relating to the component 'Communication'. When rationalising the theoretical standard, in most cases, only those columns with more than one reference were included as teeth for the cog. Exceptions were made when a reference indicated that in the research a great majority of partnerships demonstrated some specific aspect (as shown in the quote in Table 4-8 above). Similar teeth relating to a specific cog were amalgamated, so that, for example, the 'variety of communication methods' sub-component was placed in the 'communication: planning for effective communication' category, as was the 'overcoming limited internet communication' sub-component. Where there were similar sub-components associated with different cogs these were reviewed and, based on the context of the original text, a 'best location' was identified. For example, the references in the 'exchange visits' sub-component of the communication cog above were revisited and consequent upon the review I judged that the 'best location' for this sub-component was in the 'early exchange visit' sub-component of the partnership formation cog.

All the sub-components of the 'whole school involvement' component were subsumed into other cogs. For example, student and teacher exchanges were incorporated into the partnership formation, Cog 1 tooth 2; 'opportunities to raise confidence and self-esteem' were included in Cog 2 tooth 6; both the general staff involvement and creating teams sub-components were assimilated into Cog 3 tooth 4. Whole community involvement, which IDEAS (2010, p. 12) proclaims as 'hugely important' since 'it ensures the long term security of the partnership' has been absorbed into Cog 4 tooth 1. The whole community' is captured mainly by Cogs 3 and 4, as the term encompasses staff, students and their families involved in the school in some way and the wider community in which the school functions, which might, for example, include the whole parish of a Church school.

The detailed analysis of the components of the theoretical standard resulted in a reduction of the main groups to form six cogs in the OTS. Although the reduction process has resulted in fewer key words, it has clarified the focus. Since the theoretical standard underpins the operational one it remains as a reference point and the key words are still accessible. This is important in the analysis of the partnership language used by schools in the Comenius programme. It is the dynamic relationship between the cogs that drive the partnership and, in my model, the smaller cogs with three teeth will make two revolutions to the larger cogs with six teeth. This means that the smaller cogs, Cog 4 'support and training', Cog 5 'communication' and Cog 6 'monitoring and evaluating progress', underpin the partnerships' success, as each interrelates with and drives the larger cogs.

Table 4-9: The operationalized theoretical standard

Components of successful school partnerships: Cog	Sub-components: Teeth of the cogs
1: Partnership formation (processes to negotiate the relationship)	1. incorporating mutuality, reciprocity & respect 2. exchange visits 3. resolving power differences 4. sharing a vision 5. resolving issues 6. willingness to develop understanding
2. Objectives for school partnerships	1. ensuring jointly that the link is sustainable 2. jointly developing global learning across the school 3. embedding global learning into the curriculum 4. enhancing the curriculum through cross-curricular links 5. embedding partnership links into a wide range of subjects/topics 6. developing well-designed opportunities to address specific issues

As Shah and Brown (2009, p. 2) point out, 'understanding the constituent parts is not enough. We need to know how they interact.' In an instrument such as a mechanical watch, the effectiveness of the movement depends not only on the concrete cogs and their teeth, but also on the timing of the moving parts. Similarly in a partnership, the effectiveness of the relationship depends not only on the concrete components, but also on the synergy between them. In the areas between the constituent parts lie common spaces, which define the quality of the partnership environment. The Global School Partnerships' online course (2011) suggests that this partnership environment should be one of patience, transparency, trust and honesty, coupled with an openness 'to different ways of thinking and doing'. The online course indicates that there should be shared ownership and shared learning which influences shared decision-making. It is this common ground, which enables, for example, challenging situations to be addressed collaboratively, that defines the quality of the partnership. From my own observations when the cogs misalign in a partnership, for example through a breakdown in communication or a misunderstanding, it is the relationships that restore the equilibrium. Just as mechanical watches require servicing to keep them running smoothly, so too do partnerships. The types of effective servicing that I have observed with partnerships include well-planned face-to-face meetings, formal partnership

agreements jointly developed over many months that identify the parameters of the relationships, and high quality equitable conversations. Where relationships are strong, the partnership as a whole is considerably greater than its constituent parts. Conversely, I have noticed that some partnerships are seen as an end in themselves, rather than as a process by which to deliver better global learning for students and staff through the development of meaningful relationships. These partnerships often tend to wither when the funding ceases or when the members of staff involved move away either to a different institution or to take up a different role.

When extended relationships are weaker, as represented by a lack of precision in the timing between the cogs in the model, no matter how exemplary the partnership may appear to an outside observer, in terms of its constituent cogs, the overall effectiveness is greatly impaired. If the model were to be a watch, a lack of synchronisation between the cogs would render it at best inaccurate and at worst useless.

Chapter 5. Evaluating Comenius against the educational landscape using the operationalized theoretical standard as a comparator

In this chapter the OTS is used as a mechanism to enable an evaluation of the quality of the outcomes of the Comenius school partnership programme to be made against the educational landscape. This analysis comprises four stages:

- Evaluating the educational landscape for international school partnerships using the OTS
- Analysing the Comenius school partnership data
- Evaluating the extent to which Comenius demonstrates an impact on key educational outcomes
- Summarising the outcomes overall

5.1 A comparison between the nations' key educational drivers for school partnerships and the theoretical standard

The purpose of drawing a comparison between the literature review's criteria for successful school partnerships and the key educational drivers in the UK is threefold. Firstly, it is to provide a context within which school partnerships may be viewed. As noted in Chapter 1, Wanni, Hinz and Day (2010) indicate that defining the educational landscape for partnerships is extremely difficult, but it is necessary in order to understand their potential value. The second reason for the comparison is to test the theoretical standard against policy and practice in order to establish whether or not it is of a universal nature that would allow it to be transferred to other contexts. The third purpose is to provide a means by which to evaluate the outcomes from the Comenius programmes against any key outcomes identified in the educational drivers. This final stage takes place after much of the analysis of the Comenius data has been completed and is discussed at the end of this chapter.

In order to establish at an early stage of the study whether or not the theoretical standard can be used in different contexts, both the method used and the outcomes of the comparisons are included in this chapter. A comparison of the literature review's

criteria for successful school partnerships, as refined in the OTS, and the key educational drivers in the UK identified in Chapter 1 above, relies on qualitative content analysis. The documents relating to the educational drivers have been scrutinised a number of times in order to:

1. Identify the salient main themes
2. Check that information has not been misinterpreted
3. Ensure that all areas have been covered.

It was important to reduce the degree of subjectivity associated with the interpretation of the documents and therefore they were re-read three times and the understanding gained from the materials was cross-checked with practice. For example, the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland is translated from policy into practice by websites such as Seeds for Learning[45] and the International Development Education Association[46], which provide practical support for the implementation of the curriculum. Cross-checking my understanding of the policy documents with the practical expressions of the policy ensures that my interpretation also incorporates an element of objectivity. Although this process is time-consuming, the provision of a level of challenge by cross-checking means that it is possible to develop an overview that enables an effective mapping process to be undertaken. An alternative method of analysis which involves coding the large number of documents associated with each driver using a coding frame and then evaluating the results against the OTS was not adopted for two reasons. The first is that the time requirement would be even greater than the former method and secondly, each organisation constructs meanings differently, and these differences are more readily taken into account by the first approach in which the material is read a number of times. An example of difference is in the interpretation of the word 'partnership'. The Commonwealth Secretariat (2011) describes partnerships as a means to 'maximise effectiveness and optimise the use of resources', whereas in the Scottish curriculum (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2011) partnership is seen as a 'learning and sharing' relationship. These nuances are more likely to be missed in a coding exercise that, because of the large quantity of the data, entails only a single read of the material. In this study different constructions of meaning can be captured more readily by examining the texts a number of times.

Using the summaries in Tables 1-1 and 1-2 that show the main drivers for international school partnerships in the UK, a spreadsheet was constructed based on the key

[45] http://www.seedsforlearning.org.uk/browse/curriculum
[46] http://www.ideas-forum.org.uk/

statements from the drivers' documentation. An extract, below, from the spreadsheet shows some quotations:

Table 5-1: Identifying key aims and statements attributed to the two main drivers for international school partnerships in the UK

Drivers	Aims	Statements
Common-wealth Secretariat	To contribute to the development of just, democratic and progressive societies and our goal is a world in which every individual has access to high quality universal education regardless of their gender, age, socio-economic status, or ethnicity. We aim to achieve this by working with Commonwealth governments as trusted partners to attain education of good quality for all citizens.	Ministers stressed the importance of developing and utilising partnerships with a range of stakeholders in order to maximise effectiveness and optimise the use of resources. Ministers agreed to the need for partnerships at all levels. Ministers endorsed the forum's recognition of the vital role that teachers play and the need to provide them with necessary support structures. Ministers endorsed the forum's recognition of the vital role that teachers play and the need to provide them with necessary support structures
DFID	Raising awareness of development issues and reduction of poverty: every child growing up in the UK should learn about the world around them, about the bald facts of poverty and underdevelopment which face children their own age in other countries, about the potential of trade, wealth creation and economic development to build a freer, more prosperous world.	... the report has shown that government spending can play a positive role in building awareness of global poverty when the interventions are carefully designed and well targeted. It highlighted notable successes of working through the formal education sector, by integrating the global dimension into the school curriculum. We will therefore continue our development education work in schools and will put all our formal education work on a strategic footing. Our starting point is that every child growing up in the UK should learn about the world around them, about the bald facts of poverty and underdevelopment which face children their own age in other countries, about the potential of trade, wealth creation and economic development to build a freer, more prosperous world. By working through the formal education system DFID will target the next generation of the UK workforce. Schools across the UK are already delivering tremendous work to teach children about these issues. Many teachers are highly proficient in teaching international development themes, drawing on their own international experiences or their own research to teach inspiring lessons about the causes and solutions of global poverty. Britain's excellent international NGOs have also, for many years, been producing high quality resources to be used in schools. DFID has championed the use of these resources through funding the one stop website www.globaldimension.org.uk <http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/> to provide easy access to educational resources from the many organisations that work on international development. We are very much aware that the experience in schools and the resources produced by classroom practitioners is our best repository of development education expertise. Consequently, the best way to spread good practice will be through networks of schools, using teachers who have proficiency to train others who want to improve their skills. With the support of the Department for Education, DFID will establish a single programme that will work with schools in England at Key Stages 2 and 3 on a demand led basis to support teachers who have particular skills in teaching global issues to share their practice with other teachers. Outside England, support for schools will be delivered in collaboration with the relevant devolved authorities, thereby ensuring that teachers across the UK are supported.

Using the spreadsheet the key pieces of text were then reread yet again and used to identify synergies between the drivers and the OTS. For example, in the previous table, the first of the two highlighted areas is closely aligned with the cog relating to the objectives for school partnerships which refers to embedding global learning into the curriculum, as shown in the following table. The second highlighted area indicates that there will be a school partnership programme for 7 to 14 year olds in England that will enable teachers to share their learning. This statement from DFID aligns with the professional development tooth of the support and training cog in the OTS. In this way the drivers[47] were matched to the OTS. Table 5-2 overleaf shows, by means of the mapping process, how closely the main drivers have been aligned with the OTS.

[47] As described in Chapter , drivers are policy-, theory- or practice-related initiatives that promote a change.

Table 5-2: Identifying a selection of education drivers that align with the teeth of the cogs of the operationalized theoretical standard

Components of successful school partnerships; the cogs	Sub-components: the teeth of the cogs. These are indicators of successful school partnerships.	A selection of education drivers that can support different aspects of successful international school partnerships. These align with the teeth of the cogs, but are not only limited to the school partnership context
1:Partnership formation (processes to negotiate the relationship)	incorporating mutuality, reciprocity and respect	school curricula, community cohesion, Commonwealth Secretariat, UN MDG
	exchange visits	foreign language acquisition
	resolving power differences	school curricula, community cohesion
	sharing a vision	DFID; Commonwealth Secretariat, European Commission; organisations, such as British Council and UKOWLA[48]
	resolving issues	school curricula, community cohesion
	willingness to develop understanding	inspection frameworks: school curricula, departments of education
2. Objectives for school partnerships	ensuring jointly that the link is sustainable	DFID
	jointly developing global learning across the school	DFID, school curricula,
	embedding global learning into the curriculum	DFID, school curricula
	enhancing the curriculum through cross-curricular links	School curricula
	embedding partnership links into a wide range of subjects/topics	DFID, school curricula
	developing well-designed opportunities to address specific issues	qualifications, school curricula

[48] UK One World Linking Association

Table 5-2 continued:

Components of successful school partnerships; the cogs	Sub-components: the teeth of the cogs. These are indicators of successful school partnerships.	A selection of education drivers that can support different aspects of successful international school partnerships. These align with the teeth of the cogs, but are not only limited to the school partnership context
3. Leadership and management	active senior leadership team support	inspection frameworks
	joint development of action plan, with a shared set of values	departments of education; inspection frameworks
	strong leadership of partnership, that self-evaluates, and is participatory and reflective	inspection frameworks:
	strong staff support	DFID; organisations, such as British Council, Dolen Cymru, Think Global, IDEAS and Centre for Global Education
	existence of student steering committee	Achievers International
	transparency of decision-making and mutual accountability	Global School Partnerships, BUILD, Oxfam
4. Support and training	external support for the partnership, including involvement of the wider community	Commonwealth Secretariat; Centre for Global Education; BBC World Class; Global School Partnerships
	funding for the partnership	British Council
5. Communication	professional development: acquisition of knowledge and development of awareness: support for reflection and learning	DFID; departments of education; inspection framework; Centre for Global Education; IDEAS; Cyfanfyd
	planning for and developing effective communication skills; self-awareness, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, openness, flexibility	Departments of education; inspection frameworks; Cyfanfyd;
	incorporating perspectives from partnership country	Welsh inspection framework; Global School Partnerships;
	student-to-student communication	BBC World Class; Childreach International;
6. Monitoring and evaluation	formal joint monitoring and evaluation of the processes	departments of education; inspection frameworks
	assessing the educational impact	inspection frameworks; Global School Partnerships
	evaluating the cost-effectiveness	inspection frameworks

Table 4-9 in the previous chapter provides a transient picture as policy and practice are ever changing. All sub-components of the OTS are reflected to some extent in the educational drivers in the UK. No one driver matches all the sub-components. Each driver has a part to play. This means that the landscape for international school partnerships is a positive one that is not reliant on a single driver, but is supported by many. It also shows that the literature review's criteria for successful international school partnerships align with the development of skills, knowledge and understanding identified by education drivers as being important in a variety of contexts. This means that effective school linking, rather than being an end in itself, can be a vehicle for developing transferable skills that are valued in the educational systems of the different nations. The statements in the OTS are not limited to an international school partnership context. They apply more widely. This can be clearly demonstrated if those statements forming the teeth of the cogs, as shown in Table 5-2 on p.66, are taken out of the context of international school linking, and placed in a general educational context, where they can form a code for good practice. For example, in schools, and particularly in playgrounds, being able to solve issues and power differences are important conflict resolution skills that Learning and Teaching Scotland (2011) cite within the global citizenship aspect of Curriculum for Excellence. In the classroom, sharing a vision, transparency of decision-making and mutual accountability are important pedagogical attributes, as indicated by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (2011). The qualities outlined in cog 3 are pertinent skills for the leadership and management team in any educational establishment. The statements on their own have a wide application, and when summed together they constitute a powerful driver in their own right. They offer a vehicle for practising key workplace skills, and for developing the knowledge and extending the understanding necessary to be able to live and work in a global economy.

5.2 Methods of analysis applied to the Comenius school partnership data

The OTS is used to evaluate the secondary data from the Comenius programme in order to ascertain the extent to which the international school partnerships demonstrate success. This section falls into four distinct parts:

- Use of the literature review to inform the methods and define the context for Comenius partnerships
- Identification of the location of the data and its extraction
- Consideration of the nature of the data and the methods used to provide a compilation of variables from the Comenius data that can be mapped onto the OTS
- Methods used to evaluate obstacles in the development of successful Comenius school partnerships.

5.2.1 Use of the literature review to inform the research methods and to define the context for Comenius partnerships

The research methodology for this stage of the study identifies two distinct areas for consideration. The first is to evaluate the learning from the literature review in order to inform this study's research methods. The second is to set the context for the Comenius partnerships in terms of the programme's aims and its success criteria. The latter incorporates the terminology considered in Chapter 2 and, in particular, the definition of the term 'success'

5.2.1.1 Use of the literature review to inform the research methods for Comenius partnership data

The literature review revealed little to support the process of mapping a programme's outcomes onto a theoretical standard. However, scrutiny of the methodology used by Edge et al. (2009b, p. 35) in their extensive study of school partnerships in both the UK and the South, offers some helpful pointers. Their work demonstrates a pragmatic way of developing the process of analysis[49]. The authors share the difficulties of collecting and analysing large quantities of information[50] in a new area of research that relates to global perspectives. They have not been afraid to indicate that not all their expectations have been fulfilled.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p. 167) point out that the 'paradigm of pragmatism can be employed as the philosophical underpinning for using mixed methods'. The methods best suited to answering the research questions in this study include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mixed methods will enable a pragmatic approach to be adopted

[49] Edge et al. (2009b, p. 35)
[50] I well remember large wall-charts and strings marking out complex relationships across the continents, and the ensuing very large amounts of data.

in the analysis of the Comenius data. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest it will enable both the numerical and the textual data collected from the Comenius final reports to contribute fully to the final analysis, since each will be able to build on the outcomes from the other. In this way the research findings can take a holistic view.

School inspection agencies in the UK have much experience of using mixed methods. For example, in England the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 2011b) utilises quantitative analysis of school attainment figures in combination with an evaluation of learning in lessons to arrive at a judgement about the quality of the educational provision in schools. Data gathering and analysis on-site by inspectors involves multiple methods that include gathering data from a variety of sources, which Ofsted (2010) refers to as triangulation. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) point out that triangulation is not a strategy for validation, but is a way of combining the rich array of data from the inquiry. School inspections triangulate data in a variety of ways, using different sources of information, different observers and different individuals' perspectives. Sources of information will include school tracking data, lesson observations, attainment data and school self-assessment of some kind. Different observers will include the inspectors and senior staff, for example during joint lesson observations. The different perspectives are the views gathered from the staff, students and parents. The data is brought together and evaluated using schedules comprising quality-based criteria. The principle is one of 'best-fit', rather than the requirement to meet each quality statement. In this way a single judgement is reached on the basis of all the available evidence. Ofsted's model offers a widely-used, pragmatic approach for combining quantitative and qualitative techniques into a focused outcome. My study adapts Ofsted's method of evaluation and develops a schedule to evaluate the match between the outcomes from Comenius school partnerships, as detailed in the final reports, and the OTS of successful international school partnerships.

5.2.1.2 The aims of the Comenius programme

Comenius projects are required to meet both the European and the national priorities. This applies to both schools and further education institutions involved in the programme. The European priorities for Comenius partnerships in 2008[51], as cited by Cook (2008c, p. 2) included:

[51] These were the priorities that were applicable when the projects currently being reviewed in the 2010 final reports were first initiated.

- 'Addressing the theme of intercultural dialogue
- Promoting languages, whether early language learning, multilingual comprehension and/or content and language integrated learning
- Enabling persons with a disability or other special needs to take part in the projects
- Ensuring that both males and females are equally able to participate in the projects.'

The National Agency's four specific UK priorities (see Appendix 3) for 2007, which guided the applications made in 2008, included:

- Increasing and widening participation
- Encouraging greater exchange of learners, trainees, researchers and teaching staff
- Increasing the development of skills for employment
- Promoting the transfer and recognition of qualifications.

The work programme for 2008 for all Comenius actions gave priority to:

- Activity focussed around or supporting under-represented groups (including ethnic minorities, persons from socio-economically deprived areas, travellers, looked-after children and persons with special needs)
- Applicants from areas demonstrating low-take up of Comenius activity, in particular London, Scotland and East Anglia
- Activity which supports the participation of further education colleges and/or special schools
- Activity which supports language teaching and learning.

(Cook, 2008c, p. 2)

This indicates that the projects are likely to incorporate intercultural learning, language skills and an inclusive approach. These feature in the theoretical standards in the first component, Partnership Formation, and in the fifth component, Communication, link specifically to Cogs 3 and 5 in the OTS.

5.3 Locating the Comenius data and it extraction

The analysis of data, drawn from the Comenius schools' final reports from the 2008-2010 projects, forms the greatest part of this study since it identifies the practitioners' perceptions that are used to test the OTS for successful school partnerships.

5.3.1. The Comenius data

The Comenius dataset comprises 483 schools that had submitted a full report of their work at the end of their three year project in 2010. The report template (see Appendix 2) is divided into 11 sections as follows:

A. General information
B. Submission requirements
C. Identification of the school/institution and the project
D. Identification of the partners involved
E. A description of the partnership as a whole
F. Details about the school/institution's project, including its perceived impact
G. Lessons learned

H-K. Sections that relate to financial details, data protection, grant holder's declaration and submission procedures.

The report template, the guidance for its completion and the assessment documentation were carefully scrutinised in order to identify the questions most likely to provide salient information for this study. The assessment documentation includes the criteria which are used to evaluate the quality of the final report of the partnerships. As referred to previously (Subsection 2.2) the criteria by which a Comenius partnership is judged to be successful build on those provided as guidance to the assessors of the original grant applications. Once the application has been approved, provided that the institution meets the objectives defined in its application, the partnership is deemed to be successful. The quality rating awarded to a report incorporates an assessment of the outputs, such as the mobilities, measured in the financial section and the institutions' self-assessed outcomes and impact. It provides a proxy indicator of the quality of the project.

5.3.2. Locating the data

In order to elicit relevant information from the final reports, it was necessary to consider the ways in which the questions had been answered. From the template it was not possible to discern whether all questions would be answered or whether free text options would contain extended responses or just a short sentence. A stratified random sample of ten final reports was chosen by the National Agency to enable an in-depth evaluation of the sections and their subsections in order to identify those areas that had the potential of yielding the richest data. The sample was stratified using the grades given for the quality

of the reports. An independent 'panel of experts' (British Council, 2009, p. Section K3) assess the programme's final reports, in which the achievement of the initial objectives, based on the school's self-evaluation, plays a central role. The final report's assessment form (see Appendix 1) provides for judgements to be made ranging from very good, for the outstanding reports, to weak for those where, for example, there had been insufficient planning to ensure that the partnership had an impact on learners' personal development. Training for the evaluators in coming to their judgements is provided using a webinar, Blackboard Elluminate[52], which offers an online programme. This provision was viewed carefully and selected parts were reviewed repeatedly. Little guidance in the form of criteria is provided to support schools or assessors in their evaluations. There is no opportunity to cross-check the views provided by the schools in their reports with the views of their partners or to determine whether the goals originally set were sufficiently challenging.

The review of the content of the sampled reports ensured that no relevant question had been omitted from the selection, and that only relevant questions had been chosen. The volume of data available was large, and it was necessary to resist the temptation to acquire more than necessary for the current study.

The main sections of the report are subdivided into subsections (as seen in Appendix 2), some of which provide opportunities for extended answers. The majority of the data relevant to this study is found in Sections E, F and G (see Appendix 2). Section E focuses on the partnership as a whole, including areas such as outcomes, key competences, and the workplan and its tasks, while Section F captures information about the reporting institution's partnership, covering areas such as the activities, impacts, dissemination and sustainability. Section G encompasses lessons learned, which provides the opportunity to reflect on the partnership itself and the processes involved.

Section E has a number of questions that were identified in the scrutiny of the initial sample as being relevant to the current study For example E3 (see Appendix 2) asks the school co-ordinator to identify the value that the partnership has added towards a more

[52] Comenius External Assessors Final Report Training: this is a private session, but similar ones can be viewed on http://connections.blackboard.com/posts/7949755fc6

'intensive European cooperation' (British Council, 2009, p. Section K3). The data from this section includes comments from the coordinators such as:

> *'Children met and worked together as did staff in the schools and in doing so formed friendships lasting beyond the life of the project. The nature of the project was such that children learned a lot about the similarities and differences between themselves.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB-1-FR-05-09354-1)*

Responses to E7 were included as these clarify how the projects differed in practice from the original objectives outlined in the application forms. This material provides an insight into the way in which the partnership develops and whether it is sufficiently flexible to meet the changing needs or whether it has adhered rigidly to the pre-determined goals[53].

An important question, E8, asks the respondent to describe the cooperation and communication between the participating organisations. This question can be used to corroborate the findings from the analysis of the other questions. Care is needed in the interpretation of the responses since it is one partner's viewpoint only. Good communications do not automatically result in a good or successful partnership. Another question, E10, of considerable importance, asks the school to assess how effectively the project was monitored and evaluated both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

5.3.3. Extracting the data

Much of the selected data from Sections E, F and G was available electronically for the entire population of 2010 Comenius reports, so that all answers to particular questions could be collated. Data was selected and extracted onto a spreadsheet. However, retrieving three specific questions and their responses in Section E required a different approach, because these could not be extracted from the reports automatically and had to be done manually.

[53] Responses to question E6, which explores 'horizontal issues' that the guidance (British Council, 2009, p. 'Section K3') explains are issues such as sexual discrimination or cultural and linguistic diversity', were not selected as these relate to the partnership activities rather than to the quality and impact of the partnership itself.

5.3.3.1 The main body of the data

The data from selected subsections was extracted onto a spreadsheet. For example, in Section F data from four subsections were collated:

- F3.1 Impact on learners
- F3.2 Impact on teachers and staff
- F3.3 Impact on the organisation
- F3.4 Impact on the local community

Each of the above subsections comprises a number of variables, examples of which are shown in the extract below. These variables are graded using a rating system on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high, and each subsection incorporates an area for extended comment.

Table 5-3: An extract from the Comenius Final Report template

F.3. IMPACTS

F.3.1. PUPILS/LEARNERS/TRAINEES

What impact did the partnership have on the pupils/learners/trainees?

AREA	RATING
Increased language skills (Pupil-Lang)	
Increased ICT skills (Pupil-ICT)	
Increased social skills (Pupil-Social)	
Increased motivation (Pupil-Motiv)	
Increased self-confidence (Pupil-Self)	
Increased knowledge about partner countries and cultures (Pupil-Culture)	
Other (Pupil-Oth)	

Please comment on your choices.

The following table provides a summary of the indicators for each area of impact in Section F3 and indicates the maximum score possible for each area.

Table 5-4: The impacts of the projects - as identified in the final reporting form from the F3 Section

Indicators	F3.1 Impact on learners	F3.2 Impact on teachers and staff	F3.3 Impact on the organisation	F3.4 Impact on the local community
1	Increased language skills	Increased language skills	Changes to the curriculum/training programme	Increased support and participation of family members
2	Increased ICT skills	Increased ICT skills	Changes to organisational arrangements	Increased corporation with other local organisations
3	Increased social skills	Increased pedagogical skills	Increase support of the organisation management	Increased cooperation with local companies
4	Increased motivation	Increased motivation	Changes in language teaching policy	Increased support and participation of other local actors
5	Increased self-confidence	Increased project management skills	Increased cooperation among staff	Other
6	Increased knowledge about partner countries and cultures	Increased knowledge about partner countries and cultures	Other	
7	Other	Other		
Rating scale for each indicator	1 - no impact; 3 - medium, some impact; 5 - significant amount of impact			
Total score possible 35	35	35	30	25

5.3.3.2 Sampling reports for Section E

Since the data from three specific questions in Section E could not be extracted from the final report in the same way as the other data, a sample of final reports was selected in order to gain access to the information. This process required the support from the Lifelong Learning Programme's offices in Brussels and required a Comenius staff member to access the programme's storage system. In selecting both the method of sampling and the sample size it was necessary to balance the need to view a wide range of responses with the time commitment required to collect the sample by the National Agency. The sampling frame encompassed all 483 of the 2010 Comenius reports for school/institution partnerships. The initial review of a sample of reports conducted at the beginning of the

study indicated that there was heterogeneity in the population. Selecting randomly enables each case to have the same chance of selection. However, a point which Robson (2002, p. 262) makes is that this 'method relies on the list being organised in a way unrelated to the subject of the survey'. The system used to file the Comenius reports[54] results in partnerships that involve more than one UK institution often having consecutive agreement numbers. Since sections of these joint UK partnership reports are produced together, the evaluation judgements are often similar for both. In practice this means that because of the way the population is organised certain variables such as the quality rating judgement may not be randomly distributed. This was particularly noticeable for the red/weak quality rating category. An alternative to simple random sampling is stratified sampling, which, in this case, would enable the different quality categories to be proportionately represented in the sample. The reports are graded as:

- Very good – gold, with a gold star for a few
- Satisfactory – green
- Weak – red.

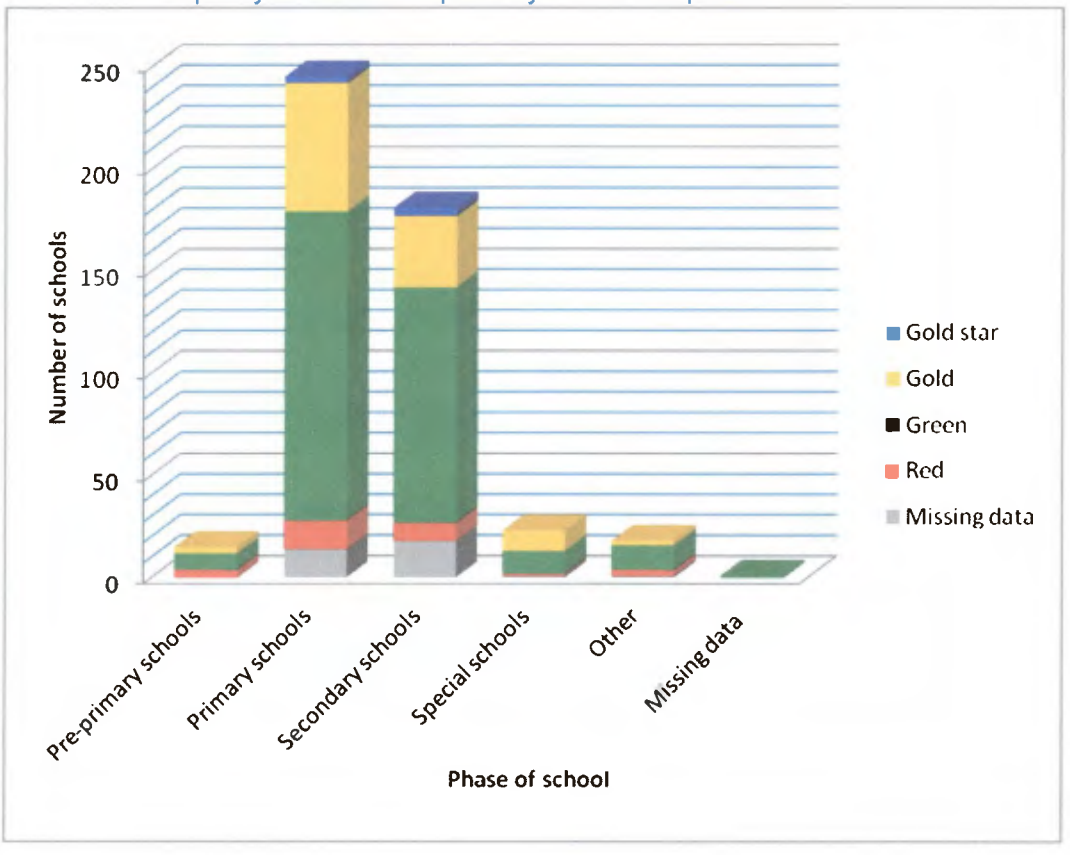
The quality rating refers only to the report and not to the project, but it is the only independently assessed indicator available that relates to quality and therefore acts as a proxy indicator for the quality of the project. Since a key variable under review in this sample is the quality of the partnerships' cooperation and communication, the use of the assessment rating is the most salient variable for consideration in stratifying the sample.

Robson (2002, p. 262) indicates that stratified random sampling can result in a more 'efficient' process than simple random sampling, where there is 'a relatively small amount of variability in whatever characteristic is being measured *[.....]* within the stratum, compared to variability across strata'. He uses the term efficiency to denote a smaller variation between the sample means and the mean of the population. He warns, however, that the improvement in efficiency does not occur where the variable under consideration has a greater variability within the stratum. This is an important point for consideration, but without knowing in what ways, if any, the responses to the specific Section E questions are related to the quality judgement of the project report, such stratum variability cannot be evaluated. As Cohen et al. (2007, p. 112) point out, a stratified random sample is 'a useful blend of randomisation and categorization' which enables 'both a quantitative and a qualitative piece of research to be undertaken' by identifying the quality characteristic.

[54] The reports are filed by agreement number and not by project number.

No factors other than the rating judgment were taken into consideration, because, given the likely size of the sample, were there to be more than one level of stratification, the number of reports in each cross-stratified cell, for example primary school – gold, or secondary school - green, would be too small to be able to draw any reliable findings from them, and any benefits of further stratification would be outweighed by the additional layer of complexity. An analysis to determine the distribution of the quality ratings variable by school phase indicated that all school phases have all three ratings, though only the two major groups (primary and secondary) have any gold stars, as shown in Chart 5-1 overleaf. This shows that no phase of schooling would be excluded by solely stratifying by the quality rating. Appendix 4, which provides additional analysis of the phase of schools cross-tabulated by quality ratings, confirms this in more detail.

Chart 5-1:The quality of the final reports by the school phase[55]



[55] The missing data for the school phase on the horizontal 'x' axis refers to cases where the type of school was missing. The missing data under the quality rating classification refers to cases where the phase was recorded but the quality rating was not identified.

Using the data spreadsheet provided by the National Agency, the reports were sorted by the quality judgement and individual cases were then selected randomly using a table[56] of random numbers to ensure equal and independent probabilities of selection within each stratum. A sample size of 10% was agreed with the National Agency. As previously mentioned, a balance had to be struck between obtaining a representative sample and the time required by the British Council in obtaining that sample. A stratified random sample of 10% of the reports ensures that there are sufficient numbers selected from each quality category so that relevant themes, if any, can be identified.

Table 5-5: The number of cases selected from each category in the stratified sample

Quality judgement	Assessment of final report	Percentage	Sample	Sample %
Gold - very good	120	24.84%	12	25.00%
Green - satisfactory	298	61.70%	30	62.50%
Red - weak	31	6.42%	3	6.25%
Not graded	34	7.04%	3	6.25%
Total	483	100.00%	48	100.00%

In this way the population was first stratified and then 10% from each stratum was randomly selected. The population data was then sorted using an Excel spreadsheet in order to provide the National Agency with a consecutive list of reports that matched their archive structure. This facilitated a straightforward process for collating the sample from the sampling frame and minimised the time required to assemble the sample. A comparison between the sample and the whole population using quality ratings and the school phase as indicators shows that the stratified sampling approach for this study was successful, as seen in the charts below.

[56] The table comprises single and multi-digit integral numbers whose frequency and sequencing have been determined solely by chance.

Chart 5-2: The distribution of the quality ratings in the sample and the whole population of 2010 Comenius school partnership reports, shown as a percentage.

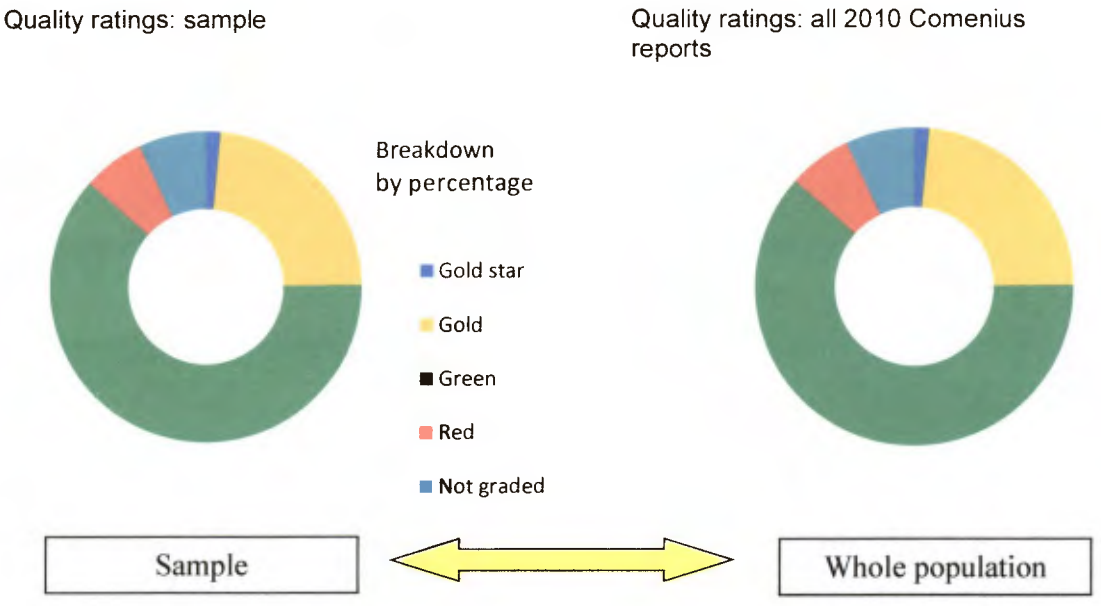
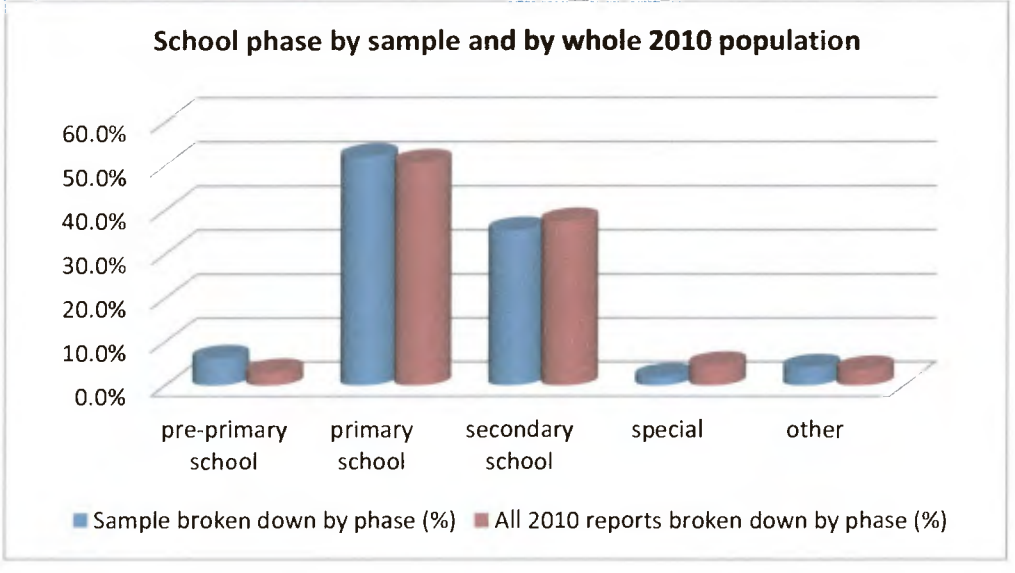


Chart 5-3: The breakdown of the sample by school phase compared with that of the whole population of the 2010 Comenius school partnerships.



The stratified random sample of 48 Comenius institutions comprised all phases of schooling. Although all had an equal chance of selection, because the sample size was only 10% of the population, there was some inequality in the distribution of the phase of

schooling in the sample, as shown in Chart 5-3 above. The pre-primary category is over-represented and schools catering for those with additional learning needs are under-represented.

5.4 The nature of the Comenius data and the methods used for analysis

The Comenius data offers a rich source of information for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The data, comprising over 25 selected questions in each of the 483 cases, has been analysed using a variety of software packages and techniques, for example:

- NVivo and MAXQDA: for some aspects of qualitative analysis, including word frequencies
- Content analysis employing different approaches in order to capture the breadth, richness and complexity of the data
- SPSS: for quantitative statistical analysis, including correlations
- Excel: for quantitative analysis, for organising the data for the other programmes and for providing tables and charts.

In practice it has not been beneficial to separate qualitative from quantitative work, because of the way in which the two inter-relate. Although some of the data analysis began with a statistical approach identifying, for example, the distribution of the variables within a particular area of impact, frequently this entailed going back to the cases themselves and undertaking some structured textual analysis. In the following sections in this chapter and in the subsequent chapter relating to outcomes, although there may be some separation of qualitative and quantitative analysis for the purposes of clarity, these are not discrete areas of analysis, but are interwoven and continuous.

5.4.1 The nature of the data

The extracted data comprised variables that were rated and shown as coded strings, and extended textual responses from the comment boxes. The strings of variables required a series of functions to make them accessible for analysis and correlation. The following table provides an example of a string of variables and its extracted data, using the F3.2 question that evaluates the impact of the programme on staff.

Table 5-6: An example of a string of F3.2 variables and their extracted data

Example of a string of variables	Disaggregated string variables						
	F3.2: Staff language skills	F3.2: Staff ICT	F3.2: Staff pedagogy	F3.2: Staff motivation	F3.2: Staff project management	F3.2: Staff knowledge of partner countries and cultures	F3.2: Staff other
Staff-LangSmall2Staff-ICTMedium3Staff-PedagMedium3Staff-MotivVerySig5Staff-PrjMngMedium3Staff-CultureVerySig5Staff-OthNotAp	**2**	**3**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**5**	**n/a**

Care was required when using Excel, because, in some cases, the transfer of a string of variables onto a separate worksheet resulted in the processor recoding particular descriptors of the variable[57]. Some strings of rated variables are themselves accompanied by free text. For example, the spreadsheet provided by the National Agency had already separated the majority of the F3.4 Community Impact strings of rated responses from the community comment text responses. However, this was not the case for all the questions selected and some had extended free text at the end at the end of their strings, as in the case of question F.3.3. This question investigates the impact of the project on the school/institution, and provides a series of indicators in a drop down box that requires the school to evaluate itself using the 1 to 5 rating system (where 1 is low impact and 5 is very significant impact). The F3.3 indicators are:

- Changes to the curriculum
- Changes to the organisational management
- Increased support of the organisational management
- Changes in language teachers policy
- Increased co-operation amongst the staff
- Other – which requires a rating.

Although the final bullet point 'other' requires a rating, it is also frequently accompanied by extended text. An extract from one school's response to F3.3 offers a wealth of information

[57] For example 'Staff knowledge of partner countries and cultures' was sometimes recoded as a '6' or more frequently as 'Factor 2'. Cross-checking revealed, however, that there was no recoding of the rating figure itself, but caution was required when interpreting the data.

attached at the end of the string, and provides a rationale as to why the school made the judgements that it did, as shown below (the text was preceded by a string of variables similar to that shown in Table 5-6):

> *'Benefits for students at XX have been the major impact. It has raised the profile of our programme of international activities to the point now where students actively seek opportunities for involvement in extra-curricular international events such as European Day of Languages, European Languages Olympics, visits to Spain and Germany etc. The project was a voluntary activity by the students at XX but it has impacted on the on-site facilities used by the project (Biology & Chemistry facilities and the school pond where we did our research on Great Crested Newts and common newts). We have been able to improve student access to these on-site facilities and have been able to obtain additional equipment for students to use in their curricular activities. The school management actively supports this type of international engagement so the impact is measured as high rather than very significant because the starting base-line for the comment is already high.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-10115-1)*

In the first instance, the entry was read in its entirety order to identify the links between the text and the grading. For example, the school had evaluated that the impact of the project in terms of the engagement with the senior management of the institution as being fairly significant (4). In the text it then provides some insight as to why it did not award itself a 5 (highly significant impact). In this case the school considered that its starting point was high. It is imperative to engage with the whole response to this question, because merely using quantitative analysis of the actual ratings could fail to identify the true picture. It is important to note in the quantitative analysis that the schools' evaluations of their partnerships are not an absolute value of performance as defined in the ratings. There is no comparator or standard for the schools to measure themselves against, and thus the rating, as in the above case, is likely to be the value added. Any evaluation using quantitative analysis on its own would have missed the value added approach that the school was adopting and consequently interpreted the more modest response as being absolute. In the UK, schools are adept at applying value added to their work, and use

children's starting points to show their improvement over time. As Ofsted (2008, p. 5) indicates a 'simple value added measure is generally regarded as a fairer indicator of a school's performance than its raw results', because it takes account of prior learning.

5.4.2 The analysis

As described above the analysis comprises both quantitative and qualitative approaches closely interlinked. The two are considered separately here for the sake of clarity, but in practice they were not discrete.

5.4.2.1 Quantitative analysis

The study's quantitative analysis relates mainly to the strings of variables associated with the Section F3 responses that refer to the impact of the project. The strings of variables, which are used in the final reports to rate a wide variety of indicators of impact, were separated into their constituent variables using SPSS. Each variable was given a code in addition to the short descriptor to assist in the mapping process. The scores of the variables were calculated, and their distribution evaluated. A variety of statistical tools have been used to determine relationships between the variables (see Appendix 16). The quantitative analysis is part of the process of mapping the Comenius programme's outcomes onto the theoretical standard for school partnerships, but it is heavily dependent upon an awareness of the context in which these strings of variables were generated. Therefore, developing an understanding of the narrative is an essential first step in the analysis of the string variables. As mentioned earlier, there is no clear division between qualitative and quantitative analysis since the two merge and emerge at different points within the study.

Scrutiny of the final report guidance (British Council, 2009) was undertaken to assist in developing an understanding not only of what the individual variables were intended to capture, but also how the ratings for the variables were intended to be applied. Unfortunately, there was little detail. The guidance (British Council, 2009, p. 6) indicates, for example, that those completing the final report should 'select from the drop-down menu the option that best describes the impact' on pupils, staff, the organisation and the local community. However, there is little to clarify for the school coordinator what is meant by 'impact' or how it might be manifested for the different stakeholders or in the different contexts of school and community. Also, although the guidance is intended to relate

directly to the final report form being used (since they both cover the same years), the sections differ slightly.

In order to gain an understanding of how the authors of the reports had interpreted the requirement to assess the impact of their projects using a rating system, a random selection of the free text responses from Section F3 was read. As there was little guidance to act as a baseline against which to evaluate the rated variables, this review enabled me to consider whether there was a consistency of interpretation and approach among the institutions. As Morin (2011) points out 'All knowledge is a translation of reality through one's perceptions, language, ideas and theories'. My aim was to develop an understanding of the variability of the 'translations'. I also heeded Morin's (2011) warning that 'every translation – as they say in Italian 'traduttore, traditore' 'translator equals traitor' – runs the risk of betrayal'. As this stage informed the construction of the analytical framework for the mapping of the strings of variables onto the OTS, the level of 'betrayal' needed to be considered.

As I had anticipated from the initial sample review, I found the variability in the interpretation of the questions relating to impact to be large[58]. The report writers constructed different meanings for the rating system and interpreted the context of the variables in different ways. For example, one school, which stated that 'the self-confidence of the second group grew more than the first due to the activities involved, however both groups profited from the experience' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP06-10850-1) judged the impact of the project on pupils' self-confidence to be very significant. I would argue that if the impact were not high for all, then it would be unlikely to be very significant overall, but without criteria to assist the writer in completing this rating it is difficult to claim that the text does not fully substantiate the judgement. Another writer, who also rated the impact of the project on the pupils' self-confidence as being very significant, indicated that:

> *'The fact that almost all the activities that took place involved the use of new technologies whether through creating films, editing music, understanding how to capture dance on film or manipulating photographs in addition to the*

[58] The outcome of the evaluation of the text is described here, rather than in a later section, because it provides an input for later work.

traditional crafts developed has supported and increased confidence in these cutting edge technologies for both students and staff.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-14008)

It would seem from this extract that self-confidence was linked to the use of new technologies, while another writer clearly linked self-confidence to some form of cultural or global awareness, as shown in the following extract:

'Through contact with the partner schools the children increased their self confidence and awareness of other culture. They are now more open and confident when communicating with people from other cultures.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09463-1)

A fourth writer, who similarly assessed the impact on pupils' self-confidence to be highly significant, explained the basis of the judgement in more detail:

'Self confidence: This had a huge impact on all of the students involved. Many of the XX School students had never given presentations before to an audience and this was a big deal for them. Students gave presentations in front of students from their own school and also students from the different schools. Students felt a huge sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from giving presentations, particularly as many of them had been extremely nervous in the lead up to it. Also a number of students had never been abroad or flown before and were nervous. Having the opportunity to travel was a huge experience for them and has given them confidence to travel and explore more of the world.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09016-1)

These four extracts demonstrate the variability of the interpretations. All have rated the impact of the project on the pupils' self-confidence as highly significant, but the interpretations of what that actually means differ considerably. All have considered impact, but each has interpreted that differently also. Rather than being a cause for concern, this rich variability, I believe, offers a crucial latitude in the mapping exercise. It identifies a real spectrum of interpretation, and demonstrates how important it is to be able to capture the variability within a flexible framework. Although the literature review assisted in providing

definitions for terminology, I believe the meanings of words cannot be contained within a rigid framework. Words live and change with context. Therefore, having explored the richness of the Comenius responses, the mapping exercise had to develop a new set of dynamics. Words became the point of entry rather than the totality. The result is that the OTS, rather than being inflexible cogs within a machine, becomes a more fluid invention where the spaces between the components are filled with words. The standard becomes organic as meanings change with the individual context. This makes the mapping of the Comenius programme's indicators onto the OTS more complex, but more valuable. It is more complex, because the meanings behind the rated variables need to be considered in the mapping process, rather than merely matching the words. It is more valuable, because it is the intended meaning rather than the words themselves that carries the weight.

The Comenius data offers a range of opportunities for analysis that assist in the understanding of multi-cultural partnerships. For example, the different cogs of the OTS are all equally important, but each relates to the others in different ways. Analysing the relationship between the teeth of the cogs is a critical stage in identifying how effectively the Comenius partnerships meet the theoretical standard. Where the outcomes and longer term impact of the partnerships are positive, the processes involved in the development of the relationship may be less important, but where the outcomes are less positive, as reported in Section G1, the partnership processes are important factors in understanding why the partnership has been less successful.

5.4.2.2 Qualitative analysis

All responses to questions that were written as text were extracted from the main spreadsheet. This included the 'other' questions as well as the text attached to the strings of rated variables. These were isolated using Excel's 'find and replace' tool. It was important to remove the string of rated variables prior to the qualitative analysis of the responses in order to avoid any over representation of particular words or phrases[59]. The extracted text was:

[59] It was important to delete the string of rated variables prior to importing the document into NVivo for word frequency analysis, because the words in the strings were identifiable by NVivo. Therefore this heavily weighted the coding. For example, prior to the removal of the strings the word 'home' was the 25th most frequently used word. Post string removal, the word 'home' was the 220th most frequently used word.

- Migrated into NVivo software in order to explore the use of language using word frequencies
- Paginated for the content analysis.

The details of the qualitative analysis are described in the following sections.

5.4.2.3 The use of language

The first step in the qualitative analysis was to explore the language used in the extended questions. In order to accomplish this, a word frequency query was run using NVivo software to produce a list of the thousand most commonly used words in the selected texts. The text used comes from the extended responses to questions in Sections E3 and F.3.1 to F3.4 and comprises over three hundred pages. An extended word query was selected so that similar words were also captured. The query was run several times using the same core documents to analyse the different scenarios that could be obtained when the word frequency query was extended from an exact match only, to one including stemmed words, and then to one that included synonyms. Having read through many responses in the reports, the latter option was selected as the neither the exact match nor the stemmed words queries captured the rich variety of language used in the different school contexts and projects, as shown below:

Table 5-7: Similar words identified in the NVivo extended word frequency query

Word	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
School	4565	2.37	civil, **civilisation**, **civilization**, **cultivated**, educate, **educated**, educating, education, education', educational, educationally, educators, school, school', school', schooling, schools, schools', schools', train, trained, training, trainings, trains
Project	4447	2.33	cast, **casting**, design, designated, **designed**, **designer**, designing, designs, external, figure, image, images, picture, pictures, plan, planned, planning, 'planning, plans, project, project', 'project', projected, projects, projects', proposal, proposals, propose, proposed, see, 'see, seeing, sees, stick, task, tasks, throw, undertake, undertaking, visual
Learning	3820	1.41	**acquire**, acquired, acquiring, **acquisition**, **check**, **checked**, checking, checks, condition, conditions, cons, determination, determined, determines, discover, discovered, discovering, hear, hearing, instruction, instructions, instructive, know, knowing, knowledge, 'knowledge, knowledgeable, knowledgeably, knows, learn, learned, learning, 'learning, learning', letter, letters, memorable, memorably, read, reading, see, 'see, seeing, sees, studied, studies, studies', study, studying, take, takes, taking, teach, teaches, teaching, watch, watched, watching
Pupils	3518	2.06	pupil, **pupils**, **'pupils**, **pupils'**, pupils', **student**, **'student**, **students**, **students'**, **students'**

The additional options of the NVivo word frequency queries that include specialisations and generalisations were not chosen as the array of similar words was too great and captured words that appeared unrelated to the original word (in this case 'activities') in the context of international school partnerships, for example, 'adjustment' and 'washing', as highlighted in the next table. The extended query does however provide an intriguing insight as to the activities undertaken, for example, adventure', 'business' and 'survival'. The following table illustrates the difference in the number of words captured between the chosen option that includes synonyms and the one including generalisations.

Table 5-8: An illustration, based on the word 'activities', of the difference between an extended word frequency query including synonyms and the extended word frequency query including generalisations.

Word frequency query	Word	Count	Similar Words
Including synonyms	activities	1825	Number of words = 29 including: action, activating, actively, alive, dynamic, excite, excitement, fight, participant, participate, triggered, trip, trips
Including generalisations	activities	47445	Number of words = 431 including: accommodation, accounting, act, adjustment, adventure, advocacy, agency, analysis, animation, annoying, application, appointment, apprenticeship, approval, architecture, art, assignment, assist, assistance, association, athletic, attachment, attempt, attention, back, baking, beginning, behaviour, best, bid, booking, boost, boring, bowling, bridge, building, bullying, business, busy, buzz, calling, campaign, capability, capacity, capture, cards, care, career, casting, catalyst, catch, catering, celebration, ceremony, chair, change, charge, check, ... succession, supply, support, supporting, survival, swing, synergy, tag, task, taste, teaching, technology, test, testing, thanks, third, throw, timing, trade, training, transport, treatment, trial, trick, triggered, trip, try, turn, undertaking, union, usage, variation, venture, vice, voice, voicing, walk, warming, washing, waste, work, workload, works, workshop, writing, wrong

The word list was scrutinised in order to reduce the number of listed words to approximately 500. This reduction involved deleting words on an individual basis. Many fell into specific categories of words, as shown in the table below, but not all within that category were routinely deleted, as the lists of associated similar words were also taken into account. For example, although 'learning' was frequently used as the participle of the verb to learn, in the similar word listing it was also use to mean the acquisition of knowledge, and it therefore was not deleted.

Table 5-9: Showing the categories of most frequently deleted words

Words deleted	Example
Adjectives	long, few, huge, European
Adverbs	quickly
Conjunctions	although
Indefinite/definite articles	a, an, the
Proper nouns	Italy, Spain,
Prepositions	via, upon, between
Pronouns	we, they, theirs, us
Verbs and parts of verbs	had, were, being

The first 50 words were then selected for further analysis. These words were then checked against the:

1. OTS to match both identical words and those with the same word root, for example, 'shared' (in the NVivo Comenius list) and 'sharing' (in the OTS).
2. Theoretical standard to match both identical words and those with the same word root.

If a word in the NVivo frequency word list remained unmatched, the similar words were scrutinised and an alternative was chosen to match against the theoretical and operationalized standards. For example, the word 'pupils' does not appear in either the theoretical or the operationalized standards, but the word student, which is a similar word associated with pupil in the NVivo list, does appear in the theoretical standard. In this case a match was categorised.

Finally, a few remaining unmatched words, such as 'international', 'opportunity' and 'parents', were cross-checked with reports identified in the literature review that evaluated school partnership programmes. These reports, which constitute the literature review's second category of studies, provide both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the outcomes and the longer term impact of school partnerships from all partners' perspectives. Some of the remaining unmatched words, such as 'language' and 'culture', were surprising, as they had been prevalent in the literature review. This finding triggered a review of the standard to ensure that the language identified in the sources was not lost in the development of the standard itself, when similar concepts were amalgamated into a single sub-component. It also ensured, as discussed in Subsection 5.4.2.1 above, that words, rather than being seen as an entity in themselves, become a point of entry.

5.4.2.4 Content Analysis

Content analysis, as described by Krippendorff (2004), encompassed the categorisation and classification of text elicited from the final reports. It was an extremely laborious and time-consuming activity, because there were over 500 A4 pages of material, as shown in Appendix 7. Two approaches were taken to analyse the information:

- Emerging theme analysis, as portrayed by Aronson (1994)
- Coding responses according to an emerging coding frame, using:
    - a manual approach
    - computer software such as NVivo.

i) Emerging theme analysis

In order to identify the key areas of comment in the extended responses, the text was read in detail to elicit emerging themes. This approach does not allow for the frequency of the findings to be analysed, but it does identify the main themes arising in the text. The materials were read three times in order to:

1. provide an overview and begin to consider the main themes
2. identify the emerging themes
3. ensure that no details had been missed and that there was a consistency in interpretation throughout the information.

This method was applied to the narrative from Section F, which captures impact on learners, staff and the school. A slightly more detailed approach was taken for Section F3.4, which focuses on the impact of the partnership on the local community. Here the responses were broken down by the phase of the school prior to the emerging theme analysis. This was to provide an understanding of whether there is a difference between the engagement of the local community by primary schools and by secondary schools. This approach was also adopted for the analysis of Section E3 that considers the value added by the partnership to developing a 'more intensive European cooperation' (see Appendix 2). Section E3 generated the greatest amount of qualitative data (over 100 pages). The purpose of the stratified approach to the emerging themes analysis was to identify whether any themes were linked to a particular school phase or whether they were evenly distributed across all phases. This was undertaken in order to identify any noticeable bias that should be taken into account when mapping the Comenius data onto

the OTS. A bias might negate the standard's universality, since, if it were not relevant to different school phases, its usefulness as a standard would be severely impaired.

An example of a Section E3 response from a primary school indicates that:

> *'To conclude we found out that pupils learned a great deal about their European partners. Specifically about education systems; cultural differences and similarities. All educational staff were able to share best practice and incorporate improvements into their own educational establishment. Through the partnership it has enabled both communities and schools the possibilities to join together to learn from and with each other, through shared projects and high quality working relationships'.*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09190-1)*

This answer links closely to cogs 4 and 5 in the OTS. Whereas the following, from a secondary school, is more closely aligned with cog 2:

> *'Curriculum development in several subject areas – leading to an international dimension embedded in programmes of study- Increased cultural and international awareness amongst staff and pupils - Increased participation of students in international activities'.*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09188-1)*

ii) Coding responses using an emerging coding frame – manual approach

A coding frame was developed that was based on the emerging themes. Following the initial analysis of the text, the documents were read again and coded accordingly. A final read through ensured that a consistency was maintained across all the entries in allocating codes to the responses. The manual approach was adopted for the Section G2 'Lessons Learned', which had only 180 responses (29 pages of text), because, on the first read through, it was clear that the number of categories was not extensive and these could be clearly defined. For the G2 text, the manual method of coding and analysing the responses was a reasonable approach in terms of the time taken, although this was still considerable because of the length of the responses. The 11 original coding categories were reduced to six for the purposes of clarity when producing a chart.

iii) Coding responses using an emerging coding frame – using computer software

As detailed coding is time consuming, even when using software, it was decided that this method would only be used for those sections where in-depth analysis would afford greater understanding to support the improvement of the programme by providing quantitative information. This was to meet specific requests from the National Agency. In order to decide which datasets to code, the text was sampled to see whether the emerging themes could be categorised simply or whether a more complex coding system provided a greater contribution to answering the research questions.

Section G1 offers nine pre-assigned categories[60] for problems and obstacles, as well space for extended text. Text from Section G1, which asks report writers to identify any problems they had encountered, provided a rich array of data and simple categorisation was not considered sufficient to capture the full range of feedback. The text from the G1 responses was imported into a software programme and a first read was undertaken. On the second read codes were developed that captured the main themes arising from the narrative. A third read ensured that there was a consistency in the coding for each response. The advantage of using the software was twofold. First, it allowed in-depth analysis and captured greater detail than would have been possible using the manual approach. Second, it enabled the larger sets of text to be analysed in the required detail with considerably more speed than would have been the case using the manual approach. Charts were constructed using the outcomes of the coding.

This approach was also adopted for question F3.3[61], which focuses on the impact of the partnership on the school, and question F.3.5, which seeks to identify 'other' areas of impact not previously mentioned. The first question relates to the research question that seeks to identify the extent to which the Comenius programme has an impact on the delivery of curriculum goals, which may be determined, for example, by the institution or by

[60] The pre-assigned categories are: communication problems; high administrative workload; lack of time for the project; lack of support within participating organisations; language problems; late grant/contract payments; organisational problems within the organisation; organisational problems with partner organisations and another category.

[61] I had developed the method, but had to obtain assistance in applying it, because of the large volume of data. The assistant used the software MAXQDA.

the prevailing educational policy. The second provides an opportunity to identify the impact of the partnerships beyond the predetermined categories as listed in the final report.

iv) Mapping Comenius indicators onto the OTS

A further stage in the qualitative work entails mapping information from the Comenius programme onto the teeth of the cogs of the OTS in order to determine whether the programme is capturing outcomes and longer term impact that align with those identified in the literature review. There are three separate stages in the process, which involves mapping onto the OTS:

- The indicators of impact as identified in the Comenius final report template, in order to identify how closely the programme is aligned with the success criteria for international school partnerships that were identified in the literature review
- The outputs and outcomes as identified in the final reports by the practitioners. The OTS provides both a structure that enables an overview to be taken of the achievement of the Comenius programme from the participants' perspective and a means of evaluating the achievement
- The impact of the partnerships, as identified in the final reports, on the learners, the staff, the institution and the wider community.

An in-depth understanding of context and content are essential to the mapping exercises. The accuracy of the first stage underpins the outcomes from the other two. Mapping in this study is a lengthy process, but to ensure that different constructions of language used had not been overlooked, it was necessary to 'triangulate' the interpretation of the indicators. In order to provide what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) refer to as investigator triangulation, three independent readers mapped the Comenius indicators onto the OTS by reading the texts a number of times and aligning the content. One of the readers was the researcher; the other two had no knowledge of the content or context of the Comenius programme. One of the two was a teacher and the other was an academic. The researcher interpreted the results, and these were discussed at length with the readers to gain an understanding of their approach to the task and to see, when there were discrepancies, whether a consensus could be reached. Subsequent mapping exercises were undertaken by the researcher and were repeated over several weeks. The outcomes were then compared and where there were differences the data was revisited and reassessed.

5.5 Method used to evaluate the obstacles in the development of successful Comenius school partnerships

Section G is the principal source for the narrative that defines the obstacles and areas for improvement in the development of successful international school partnerships. Coded emerging themes from Sections G.1 and G.2 were analysed and relevant themes from Sections E and F were incorporated. Common themes were identified and the outcomes were shown as charts.

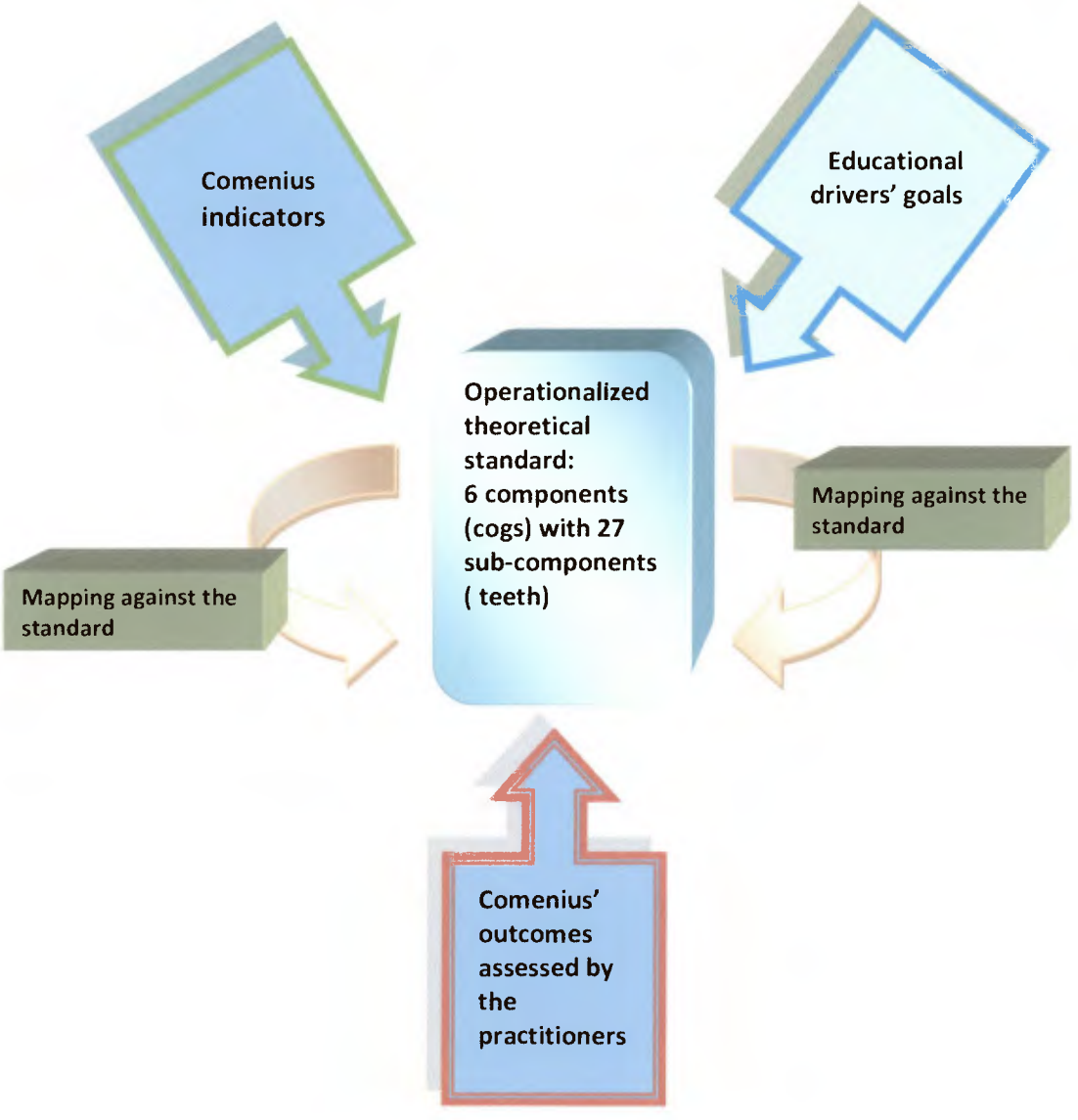
5.6 Evaluating the extent to which Comenius partnerships demonstrate an impact on key areas identified in the review of the national educational drivers

The summary of the review of the main educational drivers for international school partnerships in the UK (Chapter 1) identifies several common aims that link the four nations. These include:

- Raising of awareness of global issues
- Promotion of tolerance of and an appreciation of different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds
- Development of work skills so that young people are equipped to work in a global economy
- Improvement of relationships between different communities.

These key aspects from the main drivers were mapped onto the OTS, and the outcomes from the Comenius data analysis were similarly aligned with the standard. The match between the key issues from the main educational drivers and the Comenius programme's outcomes were evaluated using the operationalized standard as a comparator. This can be shown diagrammatically as follows:

Figure 5-1: Evaluation of key issues



The final outcome of this stage of the evaluation is dependent on the results of mapping the Comenius indicators, outputs and outcomes and impact onto the OTS, as described in the sections above. If it were found that there were a close match between the Comenius programme's indicators and the operationalized standard, and between the drivers' key issues and the operationalized standard, then it would be anticipated that in a successful

programme the outcomes as assessed by the practitioners would align closely with the educational drivers' identified key goals and the standard itself.

5.7 Overall evaluation of outcomes

In order to assess the overall achievement of the Comenius programme an evaluation schedule has been developed. This enables not only assessments to be made of the quality of the outcomes and impact arising from Comenius school partnerships, but also an evaluation of Comenius against the international school partnership landscape using the OTS. The evaluation schedule was constructed based on principles outlined in Subsection 5.2.1.1 that are used by Ofsted. The criteria for the evaluation schedule (as shown in Appendix 17) were developed with reference both to the literature review carried out at the start of the study, which generated the theoretical standard, and to the outcomes and areas of impact identified in the Comenius final report template. The large number of evaluation criteria and their close alignment to the OTS ensures that the evaluation schedule is a robust and well-grounded device. The criteria have been graded so that a structured overall assessment can be made of the quality of Comenius school partnerships. There are four grades, with 1 as excellent and 4 as fair. The last grade indicates that there are areas for improvement. The meticulous analysis of the data from the final reports provides evidence to support the evaluation of the partnerships. The large size of this dataset that encompasses nearly 500 reports, with over 20 questions selected for analysis from each, enables a thorough evaluation to be conducted. The alignment between the evaluation schedule and the operationalized standard is shown in the second column on the schedule.

An in-depth understanding of context and content was essential to this mapping exercise. For example, the first criterion in the evaluation schedule relates to the overall quality of the final reports. In order to align this criterion with the OTS, the factors used to quality assure the reports were examined in detail and similarly, as the quality rating relies heavily on the achievement of the objectives set in the initial application, the criteria that were applied in the selection of those projects were carefully scrutinised. The Comenius guidance in 2008 (Education and Culture Lifelong Learning Programme Comenius, 2008, p. 8) lists six priorities for projects. The first is the improvement and motivation for learning and learning to learn skills, which includes strengthening intercultural education. This

priority aligns particularly with Cogs 1, 4 and 5 (see Table 4-9, p.58): knowledge of the Comenius priorities, the selection procedure for the initial projects and the criteria used to rate the quality of the reports underpin the alignment process.

The evaluation framework incorporates the outcomes from both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and an extract is shown in the following table:

Table 5-10: Extract from the evaluation schedule for mapping Comenius school partnership outcomes onto the operationalized theoretical standard (for full version see Appendix 17)

Utilising the operationalized theoretical standard of successful international school partnerships to evaluate the indicators and outcomes of the Comenius school partnerships. This is intended to provide a 'best fit' outcome, where 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = fair and 4 = poor. It is not intended to provide a check-list.		
Criteria for evaluation	Alignment with components of operationalized theoretical standard (shown as cog numbers)	Score
Over 80% of the reports are evaluated as meeting the required standard (rated green), with 25% or over exceeding the standard (rated gold). No reports fail to meet the standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align very closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 80% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	1
The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns very closely with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by the fact that at least 80% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports matching the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	1,3,4 & 5	
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	
Over 70% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold). No more than 25% of the final reports in any phase of school are judged to be weak (graded as red).	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 70% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	2
The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns closely with that used in the operationalized and the	1,3,4 & 5	

theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by the fact that at least 70% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.		
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	
Over 60% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold). No more than 25% of the final reports in any phase of school are judged to be weak (graded as red).	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 60% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	**3**
The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by the fact that at least 60% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	1,3,4 & 5	
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	**1,3, & 5**	
Under 60% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold).	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact do not align closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by less than 60% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	**1,2,3,**4,5 & 6	
The language used in the final reports of the programme does not align closely with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is seen by the fact that under 60% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	**1,3,4 & 5**	**4**
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	

With the aid of the above schedule, the programme was evaluated against the OTS by aligning the Comenius outcomes with the standard's cogs, using a best-fit approach, in the same way that the indicators of impact were mapped onto the standard in Subsection 5.4.2.4.

Chapter 6. Evaluation of the Comenius programme

This chapter comprises

- Evaluation of the quality of the Comenius data
- Analysis of the language used in the Comenius reports
- Evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the Comenius programme

6.1 Evaluation of the quality of the Comenius data

This section examines some of the initial outcomes from Stage Three of the study in which secondary data derived from the EU Lifelong Learning Programme Comenius schools' final reports of projects that were completed in 2010 has been analysed. The purpose is to evaluate the quality of the data in order to ascertain to what extent the Comenius school partnerships demonstrate success. The methodology (Chapter 3) outlines the framework for the analysis and the research method (Section 3.3) above describes the detail of the processes involved.

The dataset has been analysed on a case-by-case basis to build an understanding of individual schools, and a range of variables from all the cases have been collated and analysed. This has resulted in a framework of analysis that has looked at the data from both a horizontal and a vertical perspective. Patterns have been identified and correlations calculated. My analysis has identified the significant strengths of the data and also a few weaker areas, which need to be recognised at the outset. Overall, the data provides good representation of a large programme, with a rich amount of information to substantiate the claims made in the final reports.

6.1.1 Strengths of the data

The main strengths of the data lie in the range of questions asked, the variety of data captured, the response rate and the size of the dataset. The final reports provide ample evidence of the outcomes of the projects in terms of achieving their aims and objectives. Some good references to concrete evidence are made that substantiate the evaluations.

Where the assertions of those completing the reports are supported by evidence, such as a survey of pupils' perceptions or parental feedback, the outcomes are compelling. Examples of where evidence has been used well can be seen in the following extracts:

> *'Our surveys proved that we successfully increased pupil awareness and understanding of the people and culture of the COMTEC countries across all partner schools.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09144-1)*

> *'All staff felt there was a significant increase in their knowledge base reference partner countries and cultures as evidenced by the staff surveys.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09256-1)*

> *'We conducted an impact survey to establish whether the project affected the views of the student population towards migration and a small effect was observed.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09311-1)*

> *'Family members and community members were also able to take part in surveys, questionnaires and opinion polls that took place throughout the project as well as attending our information and feedback stall at the November market'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-08878-1)*

In each case above quantitative evidence was gathered by monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the project and this has been used to substantiate the coordinators' self-evaluation in the final reports. Since the report forms themselves have a standardised system of wording there is, as Cohen et al. (2007, p. 218) suggest, 'a useful degree of comparability across the responses' that supports a structure for content analysis.

A further strength lies in the distinction between process and impact in the reports. The final report enables these two aspects to be separated. The process encompasses the evaluation of the activities involved in the project and the quality of the evaluation of the impact of the project, but not the impact itself. It is the process which is rated in the evaluation of the final report rather than the impact of the project. The quality rating of the reports and their overall impact, which is calculated by summing all the rating scores for

impact in Section F3, were correlated to ascertain whether there is any relationship between the two. The Pearson correlation figure of -.098 in the following table shows that there is almost no relationship[62] between the quality rating of the report and the sum of the four areas of impact from the projects.

Table 6-1: Showing the relationship between quality ratings of the reports and the sum of the scores for the impact of the project as assessed by the project coordinators using Pearson correlation

		Quality rating of the report
Total impact: sum of scores for F3.1 to F3.4	Pearson correlation	-.098*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032
	Total number	483

It can be seen from the above, that process and outcomes have very little relationship. This is a strength of the data, as it highlights that the programme's procedures encourage honest reporting. It is the quality rating, rather than the level of impact, that is likely to be the most pertinent indicator in any future grant decisions by the National Agency[63], because the quality rating of the final report is directly attributable to an institution, whereas the impact of the project is dependent on a wide range of variables, some of which are likely to be outside the control of the institution. Institutions are able to self-evaluate their projects' perceived impact honestly, without the fear that future funding is dependent solely on the self-reported impact from the current project.

The absence of a relationship between the quality rating of the reports and the sum of the scores from the final reports that relate to the impact of the project on the learners, the staff, the school and the community, is further demonstrated in the following table. Weak reports in the red category have a smaller range of total scores (from 58 to 100) with a lower maximum than the other two categories and the median is the lowest of the three, but the mean of the self-assessed impact scores is very similar to those reports judged to be satisfactory in the green category. In other words, even when a report is graded as weak/red this does not imply that those involved in the project assess its impact as being

[62] The range of Pearson correlation coefficient is from -1.00 to 1.00. A correlation of 0 indicates that there is no relationship. A value of .10 to .029 for the Pearson coefficient is considered to indicate a small relationship (Pallant, 2007).
[63] At this time no relationship has been established between the success of the project and future funding.

low. Conversely, even a gold report can show low levels of impact as assessed by the writers of the final project report.

Table 6-2: Showing the range, mean and median of the total scores for the impact of the project (Section F3.1 to F3.4) for the final reports grouped by their quality ratings[64].

Sum of scores for F3.1 to F3.4	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Total Impact gold	119	40	122	76.15	77.00	13.599
Total Impact green	298	34	120	72.72	72.00	14.268
Total Impact red	32	58	100	72.97	71.00	12.052
Not graded	32					

The gold category of reports has a higher mean score for impact than the other two categories, which might suggest that overall the better reports are associated with better projects that lead to greater impact. Such an assumption would be wrong and no causal relationship can be determined from the data. It may simply be that authors of gold reports complete all questions more comprehensively and express themselves more fully. However, there is a rising trend in the median score from weak to very good reports. Once again no causal relationship can be attributed, but when the difficulties of the partnerships as identified in Section G1 are analysed in conjunction with the reports' quality ratings, a different picture of the partnership begins to emerge.

Lastly, yet another strength of the data is the high completion rates. The completion of a final report is required prior to the release of the final 20% of funding, which is also dependent upon a quality judgement of satisfactory or better for the report. The programme's structured requirement manages to overcome two of the frequent problems associated with postal or web-based surveys, that of poor completion rate and poor response rate.

6.1.2 Limitations of the data

The data has three limiting factors that need to be mentioned. The first is the absence of clear guidance with regard to the criteria for assessment, both for the schools and for those assessing the outcomes in the reports. The second limitation is that the final quality grading for the school's project is a judgement of the report, rather than the quality of the

[64] Where gold = very good, green = satisfactory and red = weak.

project itself. The third limitation is that data captures only the perspective of the UK school, and does not include that of its partner(s). Despite these drawbacks, the data offers a wealth of detail, which can be used to construct a profile of the quality of partnerships, from the UK's perspective, emanating from the Comenius programme.

6.1.2.1 Guidance for self-assessment

For self-evaluation to be effective in a large programme, such as Comenius, I believe there needs to be clear guidance to ensure that all are aware of the criteria for the evaluation, so that there is a consistent approach by both the assessed and the assessors. There will still be variations in the interpretation of the criteria, but the criteria will form a reference point. As an educational practitioner, I have found that when scrutinising schools' own self-evaluations such criteria form a key starting point in any discussion with teachers. The dearth of such guidance has resulted in a very wide range of interpretations, particularly by those completing the final reports. Without reference criteria to support a more consistent approach, any detailed comparative analysis between cases is difficult.

Education institutions in the UK are experienced in developing their self-evaluation as a part of the inspection process of their educational provision. The role that the self-evaluation plays in the course of an inspection has developed over time and it is an essential part of the inspection process. There are clear criteria to support the schools in coming to judgements about the effectiveness of their provision. Ofsted (2006) has identified a number of key factors that support effective self-evaluation, which include it being:

- Integral to the culture of the organisations
- A continuous process, governed by the needs of the institution rather than the requirements of external bodies
- Clearly built into management systems
- Increasingly sophisticated in the use of a widening range of performance indicators to enhance the quality of self-evaluation
- Rigorous in the analysis of strengths and weaknesses
- Sharply focused on monitoring, and based on clear indicators
- Able to capture the views of stakeholders, such as learners, parents, carers, staff and the local community and involve them in decision-making.

All these are pertinent to the self-assessment of the outcomes and impact of the Comenius projects. A structured approach, such as the above, helps to overcome the criticisms of self-evaluation, as noted by Robson (2002, p. 7), that, for example, it is unlikely to be a 'credible or objective enquiry into a situation' in which the participants are centrally involved. Incorporating the views of a range of players and analysing a variety of data from different sources broadens the base of evidence that can be used in the self-evaluation. Triangulating the project data in this way means that self-assessment is not merely the subjective viewpoint of the project coordinator, but is the sum of a range of information and feedback from different groups. Building continuous monitoring and evaluation into the management of the project enables improvements to be made during the life of the project and is an important factor in the assessment of outcomes.

The Comenius reports tend to be descriptive and, partly because of the absence of clear guidance, frequently lack effective evaluation. The request for evidence to substantiate the entries in the final report, as in the extract below, does not always elicit sufficient evaluation:

> *'Where possible, please explain your entries; if, for example, you have indicated that the project has had a significant impact on pupil motivation, it is advisable to use the comments section to explain this.'*
>
> *(British Council, 2009)*

Too frequently the reports make statements that are not substantiated, as illustrated by the following example from the European Added Value (E3) section:

> *'Pupils learnt an acceptance of other cultures and religions.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09390-1)*

No additional information was included in the report to explain how the author of the report knew that pupils became more tolerant of cultural and religious differences.

Whilst the final Comenius report guidance (British Council, 2009) explains what will be done, it does not explain how it will be effected. It tells the school that:

'Your final report will be assessed by a member of a panel of experts. If the report is not deemed to be of a sufficient standard, then it will not be approved, and you are likely to be asked to re-submit. It is not until a report of appropriate quality is provided that the grant may be approved and any remaining grant monies issued.

Generally speaking, the more detail in your final report, the better. Please don't just complete the mandatory sections and leave the rest; this will likely lead to your report being rejected on quality grounds. .....This quality assessment process will also take into account how closely your final project resembles the initial application. Whilst it is anticipated that changes will often have to take place, please ensure that, should this have happened, it is clearly explained.'

(British Council, 2009)

The literature does not provide guidance about the assessment criteria, or define what is meant by the 'sufficient standard' (from the quote above, British Council, 2009). This brings me back to a point I made earlier in the method section that the achievement of the original goals of the project is a key indicator in the final assessment. Although there is a space for change or innovation, the quality judgement of a Comenius project report relies heavily on the parity between the objectives specified in the application form, regardless of how challenging or otherwise they were, and the outcomes achieved. The above guidance offers little to assist the school in identifying what 'a report of appropriate quality' (from the quote above, British Council, 2009) should actually incorporate.

6.1.2.2 Quality of the project

Fundamental to any discussion about the judgement of the quality of the reports is the recognition, as mentioned previously, that the assessment, by the 'panel of experts' (from the quote above, British Council, 2009), is not one focusing on the project but on the report. Thus the quality rating is only a proxy indicator of the project's outcomes.

The quality of the judgements themselves is dependent upon the presumption that the process for the assessment of the application incorporates a rigorous evaluation of the quality of the objectives set. There is a clearly defined mechanism for assessing the quality of the grant applications. An annual moderation event is held by the European

Commission to agree criteria and to ensure a consistency of approach by the National Agencies in training their evaluators. A common European quality assessment form (Education and Culture Lifelong Learning Programme Comenius, 2010) gives clear guidance as to how the marks are to be awarded[65]. For example, with regards to the 2010 national priorities, assessors are required to award either 3 points for yes or 0 for no, when evaluating the proposal against the criteria relating to whether the theme incorporates sport, active citizenship, healthy lifestyles and community participation. In another section the assessor is required to provide a score between 0 and 3 and explain the basis for the score. This clear unambiguous advice is not present in the evaluation of the quality of the final reports.

6.1.2.3 Partners' perspectives

One further criticism that could be applied to the data is that the perceptions of the UK authors of the final reports cannot be cross-checked with first-hand evidence from partner schools. There is very little opportunity in the reports to provide evidence of the quality of the partnership from all the partners' perspectives. Access to the partner reports for those outside the UK is not possible, since these are submitted by the coordinators to their own country's National Agency. Consequently, one partner may perceive the project to have been a success, whilst the other partner may not agree.

In some instances however, surveys have been jointly conducted by the partners. For example, in one partnership the use of 'surveys especially online [enabled] both schools to participate in and release the results via the internet' and also allowed 'the dissemination of results to be easily accessible to both colleges' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP06-10961-1). The report stated that the project had had a high impact on pupils' social skills and on the pupils' and staff's knowledge of partner countries' culture. Similarly joint impact can be determined by statements such as:

> *'All partners want to continue the collaboration after the COMTEC experience. Staff and students remain in regular contact both formally and informally (social networking sites e.g. Facebook). 6 of the 8 partners*

[65] This guidance has recently been developed to promote a consistency in the quality assurance across the programme. It was not available in 2008.

successfully applied for a further multilateral School partnership to further develop the collaboration'.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-COM06-00702-1)

Clearly in this case all partners perceived that the partnership was worthwhile. Further scrutiny of the report suggests that a number of UKOWLA's (2007, p. 4) pointers for success also apply, namely:

- *'increases knowledge and understanding of global issues*
- *broadens and deepens knowledge about other countries*
- *develops friendships and feelings of solidarity with others*
- *enables us to learn about self in relation to others*
- *strengthens the local community and challenges narrow and distorted ideas about other races and cultures'.*

Often the data reveals proxy indicators which indicate the non-UK partners' views of the partnership. For example, in the following extract all benefited from the project and since long term 'contacts and partnerships' have developed, it would be reasonable to assume that all perceived the original partnership positively:

'We have gained an excellent insight into pedagogical issues within all of our partner schools. Friendships and long term contacts and partnerships have been formed which can only benefit schools and future collaborations.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-08966-1)

In any evaluation of data, I believe that the analysis needs to be accompanied by a caveat reminding the reader of any reservations in the collection or interpretation of the information. Notwithstanding the few reservations raised above, this data offers a wealth of material from which to construct a valid profile that can be used as a comparator with the OTS.

6.2 The language of the Comenius reports

Analysis of the language used by Comenius project coordinators in completing their final reports in 2010 indicates that there is a good synergy with the language used in other

partnership programmes. This is important, because, although the Comenius projects are required to focus on outputs such as the number of mobilities, the reports also capture the richness of the experiences of the partnerships. The analysis, however, only explores the language used to reflect the experiences of the UK partner school and not that of the partnership as a whole.

A table showing the 50 most frequent words in the selected[66] Comenius questions is shown below. The fourth and final columns identify whether the word was matched to the theoretical or operationalized standards, or whether one of the similar words associated with the primary word appeared in the theoretical standard. Roots of words were also used in the matching exercise, so that, for example, the word 'education' in the NVivo list of the 50 most frequently used words from the selected Comenius text was matched with 'educational' in the OTS.

[66] The text used comes from the extended responses to questions in Sections E3 and F.3.1 to F3.4 and comprises over three hundred pages.

Table 6-3: The 50 most frequently used words in Comenius reports

Word	Ranking	Frequency	Word matched or partially matched	Word	Ranking	Frequency	Word matched or partially matched
school	1	4565		organisation	26	1233	
project	2	4447		meetings	27	1217	
learning	3	3820		presentations	28	1192	
pupils	4	3518		positive	29	1144	
involved	5	3247		place	30	1119	
work	6	2809		different	31	1091	
developed	7	2605		understanding	32	1061	
staff	8	2309		management	33	1031	
countries	9	2147		teachers	34	1022	
partner	10	2106		improved	35	980	
support	11	2075		confidence	36	925	
skills	12	1978		links	37	912	REPSYN
part	13	1851		international	38	911	REPSYN
activities	14	1825		exchange	39	886	
increased	15	1654		motivation	40	853	
language	16	1613		impact	41	840	
experience	17	1525		opportunity	42	837	
teaching	18	1492		good	43	834	
visits	19	1484		parents	44	829	
community	20	1458		systems	45	824	
local	21	1435		education	46	809	
cultures	22	1431		year	47	791	
children	23	1343		great	48	789	
result	24	1335		practice	49	788	
gained	25	1309		knowledge	50	766	

Key	
	Match with operationalized theoretical standard
	Match with theoretical standard
	Similar word matched with operationalized theoretical standard
	Similar word matched with theoretical standard
REPSYN	Synonyms adopted by the report
	No match

Two pairs of words, as mentioned in Chapter 1, are used synonymously throughout the report and these gave rise to the code 'REPSYN'. The first pair is 'partnership' and 'link',

and the second is 'global' and 'international'. The latter word from each of the pairs appears in the table above, and both of their synonyms appear in the OTS[67].

Table 6-4: The matches between the words most frequently used in selected texts from the Comenius reports and the operationalized and theoretical standards

Matching	Number	Percentage
Matched with operationalized theoretical standard	18	36%
Matched with theoretical standard	9	18%
Similar word matched with operationalized theoretical standarc	10	20%
Similar word matched with theoretical standard	4	8%
No matches	9	18%
Total number of words	50	100%
Number of matches	**41**	**82%**

Of those words for which there were no matches, some are likely to be project specific, such as 'year', which is frequently used to denote the year groups involved in the Comenius projects, and 'presentations', which might feature as part of the project work. Other words, such as 'countries' and 'local' whilst not explicitly referred to in the theoretical standard, are implicit in the components. For example, the literature review indicates (Building Understanding through International Links for Development, 2007; Global People, 2010; Global School Partnerships, 2007b) that developing a relationship which incorporates a sense of mutuality, ensures reciprocity and engenders respect will require the negotiation of effective practice in which cultural, faith and language differences between the countries are taken into account and valued. The term 'local' is taken to refer to the local community involvement, which is part of the fourth cog in the operationalized theoretical perspective.

All nine unmatched words identified above appear in Edge et al.'s (2009b) extensive study of north-south school partnerships, and therefore, to some extent, the language used by Comenius coordinators in describing their partnerships falls within the overall set of common language used to describe partnerships.

It is clear from the above analysis that the language used by the Comenius coordinators matches closely with that used by others involved in school partnerships. As 82% of the most frequently used words in the selected Comenius text matches in some way the text

[67] If the report synonyms were not used, the word 'international' would not be matched.

used in the operationalized and theoretical standards, it can be seen that common language for partnerships is emerging. The successful use of the OTS as a framework for comparison in this analysis of language confirms it can be transferred into different contexts and that it incorporates indicators that are pertinent in practice.

6.3 Evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the Comenius programme

This section evaluates the outputs and outcomes of the Comenius projects, as measured by the authors of the final reports, as part of assessing the extent to which Comenius partnerships demonstrate success. Three measures are considered:

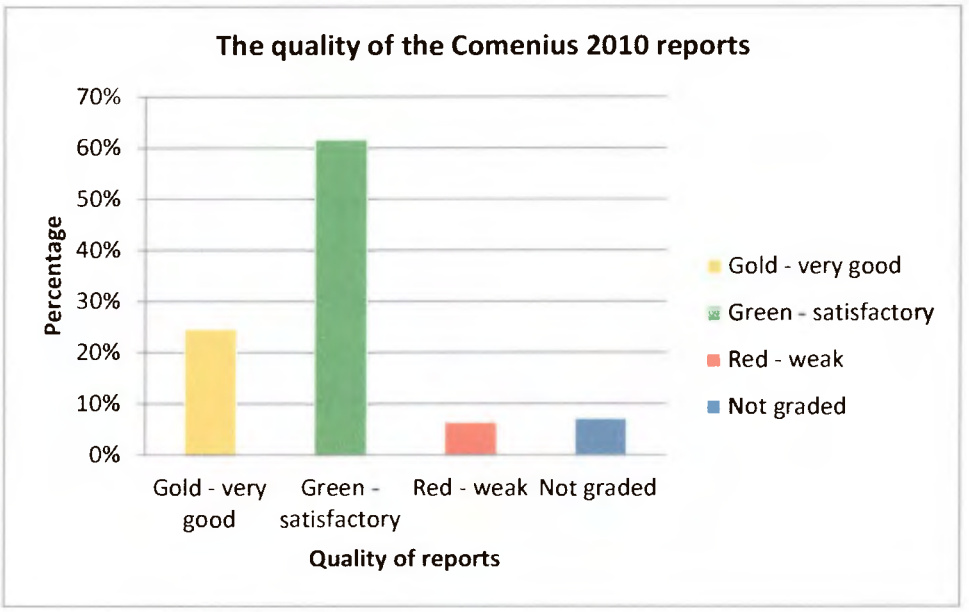
- The quality ratings: to show the extent to which the Comenius partnerships achieve their intended outputs and outcomes, and deliver impact
- Self-assessed achievement of outputs and outcomes: to show the extent to which the Comenius partnerships achieved the proposed outputs and outcomes
- Self-assessed achievement of aims and objectives: to show the extent to which the Comenius partnerships achieved the proposed aims and objectives.

An evaluation schedule, as described in Subsection 5.7 and shown in full in Appendix 17, is used to assess the achievement of the Comenius programme. The schedule not only incorporates the graded outcomes and impact from the Comenius reports, but also is underpinned by the literature review that generated the OTS. Its application in the evaluation of data from the Comenius projects implicitly involves that standard.

6.3.1 Analysis of the quality ratings to show the extent to which the Comenius partnerships achieve their intended outputs and outcomes, and have a measurable impact

The assessment of the final report provides a quality grading that not only incorporates a review of the outcomes and impact of the project, but also a financial section that measures the outputs in terms of mobilities. On a three part scale, where gold is very good (and better as some have been awarded a gold star), green is satisfactory and red is weak, 25% of the final reports were graded as being very good, with over 60% being in the green satisfactory category. Over 417 of the 483 reports, as can be seen in the following chart, were judged to be satisfactory or better by a panel of independent experts and had met the outputs and outcomes as planned (see Appendix 6 for further information).

Chart 6-1: Showing the quality ratings of the 2010 Comenius reports as assessed by an independent panel



6.3.2 Analysis of the achievement of outputs and outcomes based on self-assessment in a sample of the final reports

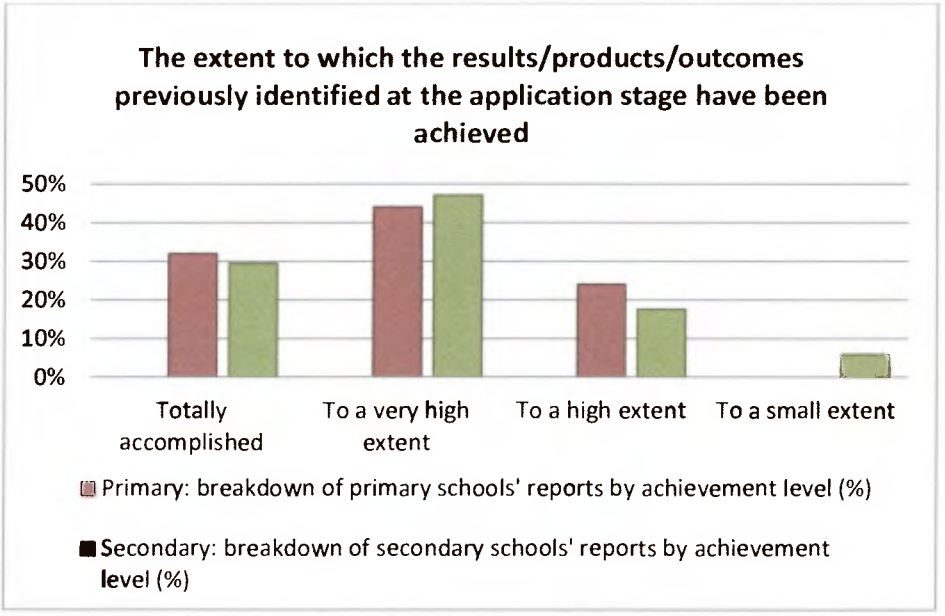
The authors of the final reports assessed their level of outputs and outcomes in a question in Section E (question 10.2). The responses to this question were only available for 48 reports that were selected in the stratified sample. The analysis of the responses indicates that nearly 77% of authors of the reports considered that they had achieved nearly all that they set out to do in the project, as shown in the following table. This is slightly lower than the grading of the reports, where over 85% were judged by the independent assessors to have met their outputs and outcomes. The slight discrepancy may arise because of differences in the interpretation of the degree to which outputs, outcomes, aims and objectives were met. Some reports indicate that as the project developed, outputs, outcomes, aims and objectives similarly developed. It is likely that the coordinators took these changes into account in their self-evaluation, but the external assessors were not required to evaluate the achievement at this level of detail.

Table 6-5: Showing the extent to which outputs and outcomes were achieved as assessment by the project coordinators

The extent to which the results/products/outcomes previously identified at application stage achieved were achieved	Total	Percentage
Totally accomplished	**14**	**29.2%**
To a very high extent	23	**47.9%**
To a high extent	10	**20.8%**
To a small extent	1	2.1%
Total	**48**	100.0%

The information in the above table can be broken down by school phase, as seen in the following chart, although the numbers are too small to include phases other than primary and secondary[68].

Chart 6-2: The Comenius programme's outputs and outcomes as assessed in the 2010 final reports from primary and secondary schools



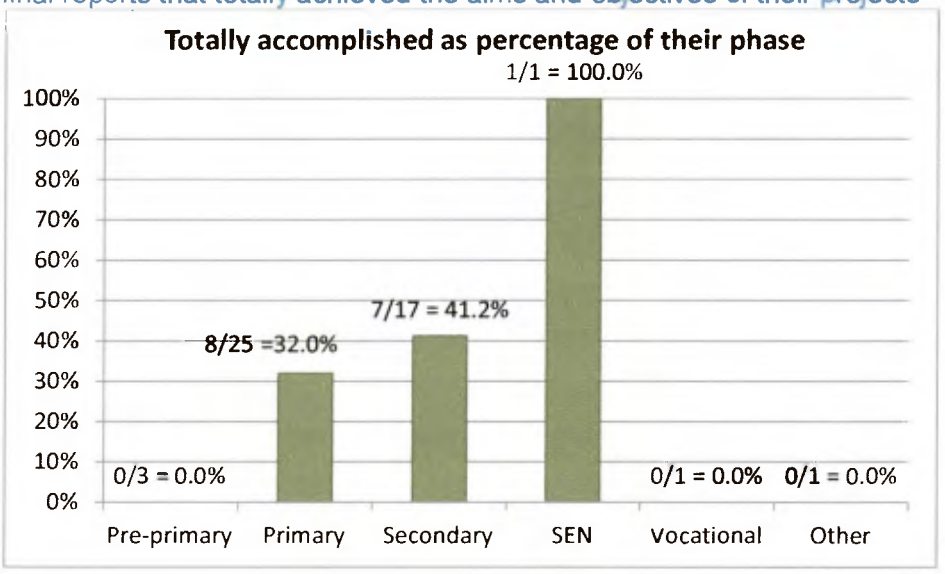
Primary and secondary schools show broadly similar achievement profiles (as seen in Chart 6-2 above) with regards to the anticipated outputs and outcomes.

[68] The sample contained only one school for pupils with special educational needs (from a total population of 23), three pre-primary schools (from a total population of 15) and one from the 'other' group that includes vocational training institutions and initial teacher training (from a total population of 18).

6.3.3 Analysis of the achievement of the proposed aims and objectives based on self-assessment in a sample of the final reports

A further question in Section E (question10.3) invites the report writers to evaluate the degree to which they have achieved the aims and the objectives given in their applications. In the sample, the responses to this question are almost identical to the earlier one. Of the 48 reports in the sample, 33% (16) stated that the aims and objectives of the project had been totally accomplished, with a further 50% (24) declaring that these had been met to a very high extent. Overall, 83% of the reports in the sample indicated that almost all the aims and objectives had been achieved. As before this outcome can be broken down by school phase, as shown in the chart below, but it should be borne in mind that the numbers are small in all categories but primary and secondary:

Chart 6-3: Showing the percentage of institutions in each phase, based on a sample of final reports that totally achieved the aims and objectives of their projects

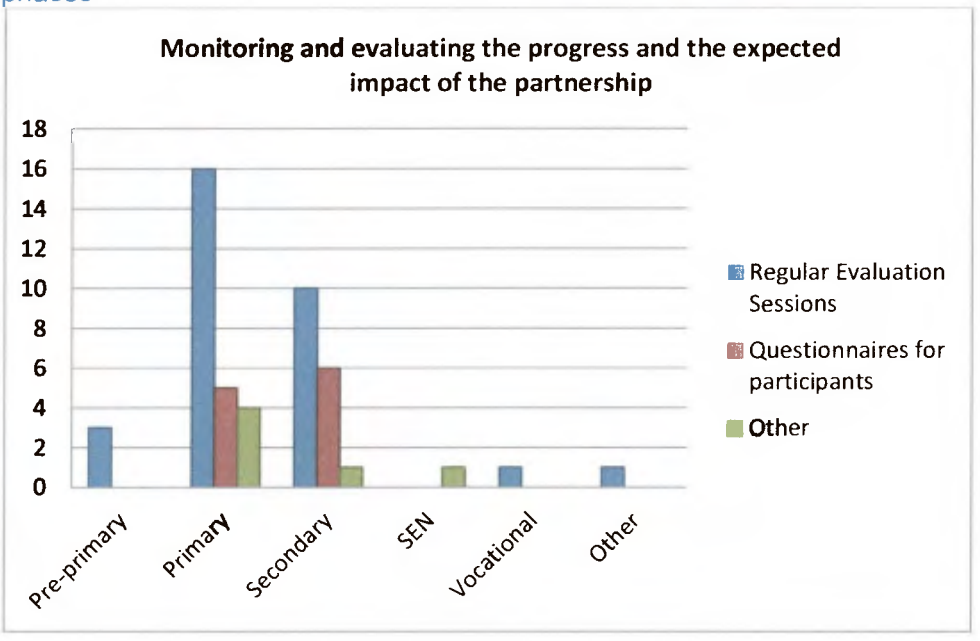


A slightly higher percentage of secondary schools completely achieved their aims and objectives (as seen in Chart 6-3 above). Pearson's correlation[69] suggests that there is little relationship between the phase of institution and the degree to which the aims and objectives were met.

[69] A Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.215 was calculated. See Appendix 6.

Since monitoring and evaluation feature in the OTS as a separate component (Cog 6), it is useful to explore whether different approaches to monitoring and evaluation used in practice have any discernible difference on the achievement of the projects' aims and objectives. The Comenius report writers are required to identify, in question 10.1a, their approaches to monitoring and evaluation using predetermined groups the report. Of the 48 reports in the sample, 31 stated that monitoring and evaluation of the partnership took place during regular sessions. Only 11 used questionnaires to evaluate the participants' experiences. Based on the sample of 48 final reports, the approaches to monitoring and evaluation can be shown as below[70]:

Chart 6-4: The approaches to monitoring and evaluation used by institutions in different phases



The approaches used by primary and secondary schools to monitor and evaluate their projects are broadly similar. It can be seen in the chart above that schools in both phases mainly have regular monitoring and evaluation sessions, followed by the use of questionnaires and finally some other unspecified approach. The school for pupils with special educational needs did not use questionnaires, nor did the pre-primary schools. Pearson's correlation was used to gauge the strength of the relationship between the different methods of monitoring and evaluation and the achievement of the projects aims

[70] See Appendix 6 for further details.

and objectives. The result of -0.186 suggests that there is little relationship between the two.

6.3.4 Summary of the evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the Comenius programme

Over 80% of the reports were graded as meeting the required standard (rated as green), with 25% exceeding the standard (rated as gold). Using the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17, the quality of the final reports can be judged as good[71]. Greater detail can be seen in Appendix 19. Similarly, both the level of outputs and outcomes achieved that were identified in the original application forms (77%)[72] and the proportion of aims and objectives achieved (83%), as assessed by the coordinators against their original applications, are also good[73]. The level of achievement of the projects' outputs, outcomes, aims and objectives in primary and secondary schools are broadly similar.

[71] Although 86.5% of the reports meet the required standard, and 25% of these are gold or better, of the 15 schools in the pre-primary phase 4 (i.e. 27%) submitted reports that were weak. This means that the overall quality of the reports cannot be excellent. A 'best- fit' judgement has been made which grades the quality of reports as very good, despite the percentage of weaker reports being greater than 25%.

[72] This result is based on a sample of Comenius reports.

[73] Although 83% of the sample of Comenius reports indicated that all or nearly all of the aims and objectives were met, 2% indicated that these were achieved only to a small extent, and thus the score is 2, very good, rather than 1, excellent.

Chapter 7. Analysis of the Comenius programme's co-ordinators' feedback.

The practitioners' final reports provide a rich array of data that can be used not only to assess longer term impact of the programme from their perspectives and to evaluate to what extent Comenius partnerships demonstrate success, but also to review the programme in order to improve its delivery in the future.

7.1. Areas of impact

Quantitative analysis of the rated variables, as described in Chapter 5, indicates that those completing the final reports considered that the impact of their project on learners and staff were similar. The least impact was seen in the wider community. The analysis is discussed in greater detail in Appendix 8. Exploration of the data shows that for pupils and staff the greatest impact of the partnerships was reported to be an increase in the knowledge about the partnership country and an increased awareness of cultural aspects. This is highlighted in green in the following table which ranks the areas of impact based on the data from the reports. In the institution, the greatest impact, highlighted in yellow, was seen in the increased cooperation among the staff. In the local community, the partnership was reported to have the greatest impact on families and friends of those involved in the project. The lowest area of impact was seen with local companies, followed by changes to language teaching policy, as highlighted in brown overleaf.

Table 7-1: A overview of the analysis of the constituent parts of the strings of variables from Section F3 (Extract from Table Appendix 8-2)

Comenius predetermined categories of impact, focusing on:	Ranking of impact (based on the mean scores for each indicator as given by authors of their final reports)
F3.1: Pupils - increased knowledge of partner countries and awareness of cultural differences	1
F3.1: Pupils - increased motivation	2
F3.1: Pupils - increased social skills	3
F3.1:Pupils - increased self-confidence	4
F3.1: Pupils - increased ICT skills	5
F3.1: Pupils - increased language skills	6
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased knowledge about partners' countries and cultures	1

F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased motivation	2
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased project management skills	3
F3.2: Teachers and staff increased - pedagogical skills	4
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased ICT skills	5
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased language skills	6
F3.3: Institution: increased cooperation among staff	1
F3.3: Institution - changes to the curriculum/training programme	2
F3.3: Institution - increased support of the organisation management	3
F3.3: Institution - changes to organisational management	4
F3.3: Institution - changes in language teaching policy	5
F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of family members	1
F3.4: Local community - increased cooperation with other local organisations	2
F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of other local actors	3
F3.4: Local community - increased cooperation with local companies	4

The indicators of impact were assessed against those specified in the evaluation schedule as shown in the table below.

Table 7-2: Percentages of reports reaching each level in the four areas of impact ((Extract from Table Appendix 8-3)

Total of rating scores as a percentage of total score available		Percentage of reports with total ratings that equal to or exceed the medium level of impact (60%)			
Level of impact		Impact on learners	Impact on staff	Impact on institution	Impact on local community
Medium - High	**60%**	83.4%	74.9%	29.6%	15.1%

Using the evaluation schedule to assess the indicators of impact, the analysis can be shown in the following table:

Table 7-3: Showing the grade awarded to each of the key areas of impact, using the evaluation schedule (Appendix 17)

Learners	The impact of the partnerships on learners was **excellent**, as demonstrated by the fact that 83.4% of the reports gave this area of impact at least 60% of the available rating marks
Staff	The impact on staff was **good**, as seen by the fact that 74.9% of the reports gave this area of impact at least 60% of the available rating scores

Institutions and local communities	The impact of the partnerships on the institutions and on the local communities was reported as being **poor**. Only 29.7% of the reports rated the impact on the institution with 60% of the available rating scores, and similarly only 15.1% of the reports awarded 60% of available marks to the impact on the local **community.**

Qualitative analysis of the emerging themes indicates that the greatest area impact incorporates teacher professional development, closely followed by interpersonal skills and multi-cultural awareness. Over 135 themes from Sections E and F were identified. It was possible to collect the themes into groups, all of which were found to closely align with the cogs of the OTS. Appendix 8 discussed this in more detail and Appendices 10 to 14[74] identify the arising themes from the different sections.

The themes indicate that the partnerships had an impact on the curriculum, for example by enhancing its relevance for the learners, by affording opportunities for cross-curricular work and by providing enrichment activities, but these partnerships did not significantly alter the curriculum. This reflects the findings of the quantitative analysis of the strings of variables, in which the impact of the partnerships on changing the curriculum was ranked 13th out of 21. In many of the responses the Comenius partnership was not viewed as a change agent for the curriculum, but was intended to link to the existing curriculum with minimum disruption. For example, one school pointed out that there were only 'small changes to the curriculum as the activities involved in the project were designed to fit into the existing curriculum with least disruption (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09178-1). Another school confirms this view, saying 'As the project was curriculum linked it did not disrupt or change the curriculum but fitted very well into our daily teaching' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-08911-1). The analysis using an emerging coding frame for the question (F3.3[75]) that focuses on the impact of the partnership on the school, had similar findings, namely that over 34% of the responses cite the curriculum as the key area of impact within their organisations. One school explains the breadth of the impact:

> *'The project was part of a whole school drive to improve understanding of other cultures and countries and improve understanding for children of global issues. We were adding depth and enriching the curriculum with new*

[74] Appendix 10 provides the emerging themes for Section E3 and E8, Appendix 11 for E7 and E10, Appendix 12 for F3, Appendix 13 for the coded analysis of Section F3.3 and Appendix 14 for the coded analysis for Section F3.5

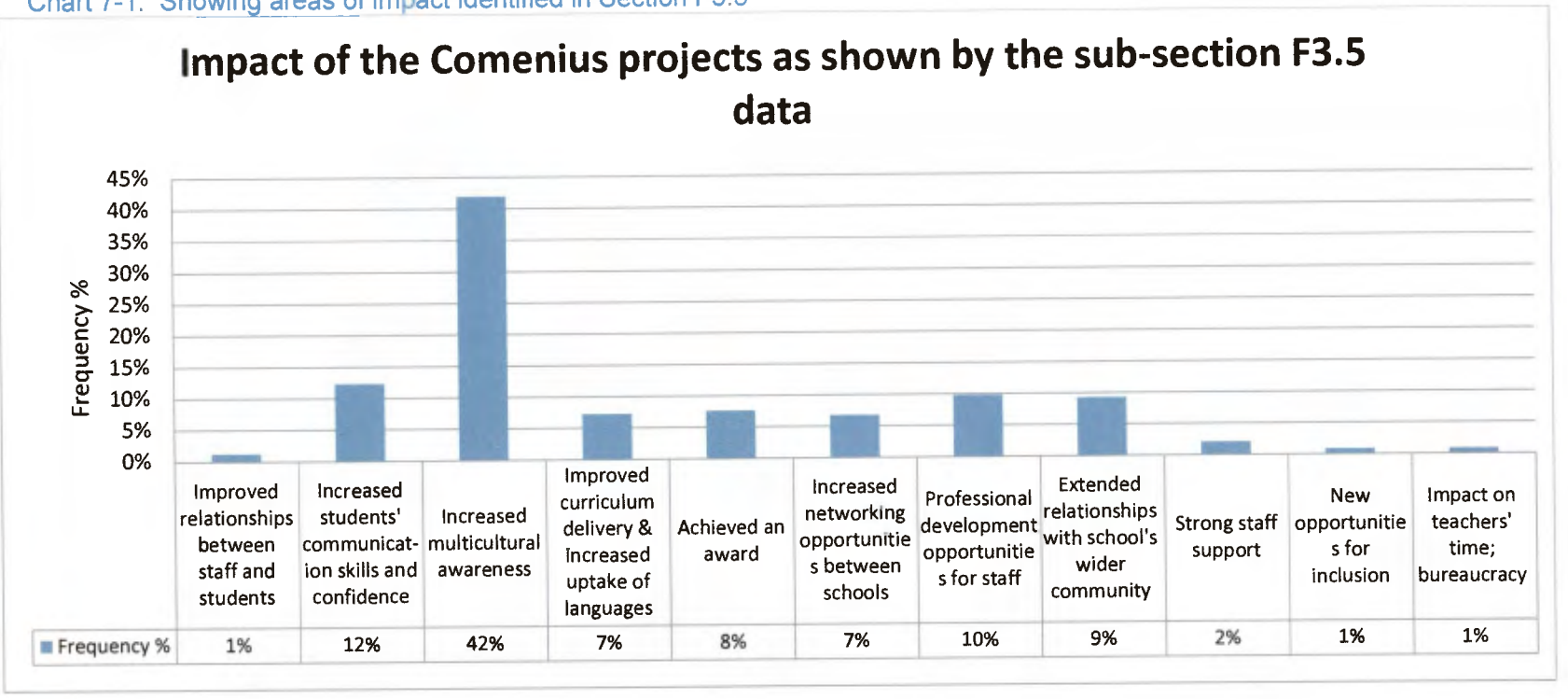
[75] Appendix 13 lists the themes.

and exciting ventures which would capture and motivate a wider group of pupils'.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09147-1)

Using an alternative source of information, F3.5, which requests feedback on areas not previously commented upon, enables emerging findings to be cross-checked. The coded emerging themes indicate that the most important area of impact is the increased awareness of multicultural issues, as shown in the following chart:

Chart 7-1: Showing areas of impact identified in Section F3.5



The coded F3.5 data provides good evidence to substantiate the impact that the partnership has had on developing a global awareness in the school, for example:

> *'As a school we feel that through taking part in a Comenius project the children now have a far greater and broader understanding of other countries' cultures.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09173-1)*

In summary, using quantitative and qualitative analysis the key areas of impact of a Comenius partnership are:

- Learners: increased global awareness, motivation and self-confidence
- Staff: professional development opportunities
- Curriculum: enhancing rather than changing it.

The OTS is a useful framework for grouping the emerging themes, as seen in detail in Appendix 8, and the alignment between the programme's areas of impact, as assessed by the project coordinators, and the OTS is a close one. The evaluation schedule in Appendix 17 indicates that a close alignment demonstrates a good level of success for a school partnership programme when viewed against the international school partnership landscape. Also, as shown in Appendix 9, the Comenius programme's criteria for successful school partnerships similarly align closely to the OTS, as 74% are matched. Once again the evaluation schedule suggests that such an alignment can be considered to be good. Appendix 19 provides a summary of the application of the evaluation schedule with regard to programme's the areas of impact. The triangulated evidence strongly supports the conclusion that, on the basis of impact as assessed by the UK institution, the Comenius programme is successful in promoting effective school partnerships.

A quote from one school's report demonstrates the value that students place on their international learning:

> *'The project has been highly regarded across the school and community. Students have used their participation in the project as a crucial part of their application for UCAS.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09141-1)*

7.2. Difficulties encountered

The final reports provide ample opportunity for the practitioners to provide feedback to improve the programme. Not only do many of the questions in Sections E and F invite extended responses, but Section G is devoted to obtaining feedback on the obstacles and difficulties that institutions have encountered in their projects and getting comments on and making recommendations for improvement in the programme's delivery. The analysis of emerging themes, discussed above, identified not only positive attributes, but also responses that were classified as negative themes. These were incorporated into the review of the programme.

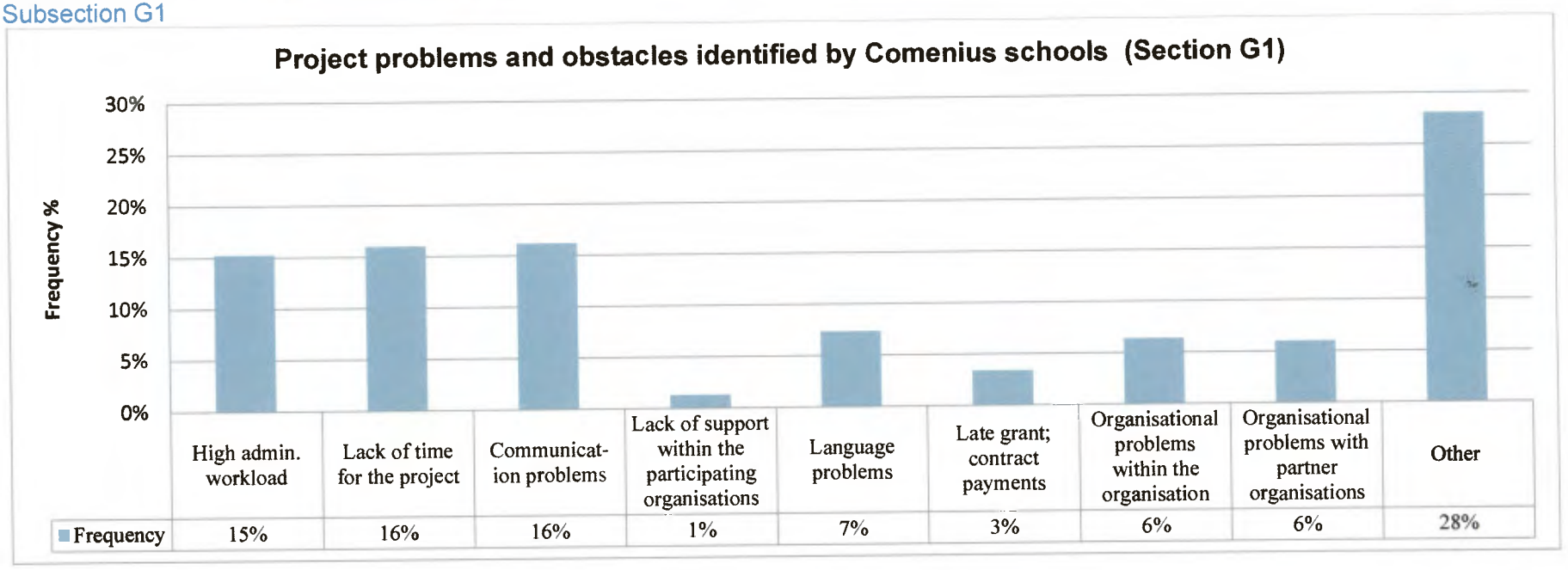
Section G1 requires that institutions classify their feedback on problems encountered by using predetermined categories and adding a comment. Section G2 is for textual comment only. Analysis of both Sections G1 and G2 involved coding the responses, while G1 also included analysis of the frequencies of the predetermined categories. The response rate for Section G1 was over 75% (371), with 323 schools both categorising their feedback and commenting. Of the remaining 48 schools, 37 only provided extended comments and 11 merely indicated a category There was a lower completion rate for Section G2, with only 39% (187) of the reports having this question completed. The emerging themes from the extended text in Sections E7, E8 and F3, which focus on the achievement of the workplan, the communication and cooperation between the partners and the impact on the partnership stakeholders in the UK, identified not only positives, but also negatives. These negative themes have been incorporated in this analysis as they provide another source of feedback that features the difficulties encountered.

Chart 15-1 overleaf shows the pre-assigned categories of problems and obstacles as listed in the final report template and the frequency with which schools identified these. Some schools identified a string of problems, while others merely chose one. More detailed analysis can be found in Appendix 15. From the chart it can be seen that the predominant issues for schools are linked to the high administrative workload, the lack of time for the project and communication problems. The 'other' pre-assigned category captures a wide range of responses, the majority of which could be placed in alternative pre-assigned categories. For example, one of the 'other' responses describes time management issues and this particular one could be placed in the second group, 'lack of time for the project'; another refers to video conferencing technical difficulties, which is part

of the 'communication problems' category; a third mentions the problems of staff changes in the partner school, which could have been placed in the 'organisation problems with partner organisations' category. Some of the 'other' responses that did not fit within an alternative category included reduced participation because of swine flu and the problems caused by the ash cloud resulting from the volcanic eruption in Iceland 2010[76].

[76] In 2010 eruption of the Eyjafjallajokull volcano in Iceland caused massive disruption to European air traffic.

Chart 7-2: Showing problems and obstacles associated with the Comenius projects as identified by the predetermined categories in Subsection G1



The coding of the extended text for Section G1, as is shown in Table 15-1 below, provides a slightly different picture of the range of difficulties faced by the schools undertaking Comenius projects. The review of the responses identified 16 emerging themes that were used as codes for the text. Appendix 15 shows these in detail. As above, these themes can be grouped. A distinction has been made between those difficulties that are likely to reside with the coordinator managing the project, and those issues that are likely to be faced by the people engaged in the project itself. There is no clear dividing line and the grouping is flexible. In some schools it may be that all the issues lie under project management and are managed by the coordinator. Coding the emerging themes enables the frequency of the different issues facing the schools to be identified. . The main difficulties identified relate to:

- Staff turnover and staff sickness
- Unforeseen problems, such as the volcanic ash cloud
- Time management
- High workload.

Table 7-4: Showing the categories and frequencies of problems that emerged from the coding analysis of the text provided in Section G1 of the Comenius reports

Difficulties relating to:		Frequency %
Project management	time management	10.2%
	high workload, unevenly shared workload	10.0%
	administration: paperwork, report deadline	9.3%
	funding and budgeting	5.6%
	child protection requirements	5.1%
	problems when partnerships are rearranged	4.9%
	completion of some tasks because of school curriculum requirements, school specialisms etc.	1.9%
ICT	ICT difficulties	8.8%
Mobilities	finding mutually acceptable dates for visits as term dates differ	5.3%
	difficulties with travel	0.9%
	unforeseen problems e.g. volcanic ash	10.9%
Communication	time zone differences, late e-mails, misunderstandings	8.6%
	language barriers	5.8%
Staff and students	staff turnover and staff sickness	11.6%
	keeping all staff and students motivated and engaged	1.4%
TOTAL	432 responses	100.0%

It can be seen in the table above that the most frequently identified difficulties in the predetermined categories' analysis (the high workload and lack of time for the project management) come, below the problems associated with staff turnover and staff

sickness and unforeseen problems. The emerging themes coded analysis indicates that these are the most frequently faced difficulties. The coded analysis of Section G1 highlights the importance both of widening participation in the project to include more staff and of undertaking a thorough risk assessment that incorporates some consideration of unanticipated external circumstances prior to any trip. The difference in the findings between the emerging codes and the predetermined categories is important to note and may have been missed had the text not been analysed in detail. These two issues are included in the detailed recommendations offered in Appendix 21. The coded analysis of Section F3.5 provides an insight into two schools' concern over the time the project took. Both responses (out of 238) commented on the impact the project had on the teachers, due to the lost time spent planning the project and dealing with bureaucracy. It would appear that the partnership may not have been seen as a vehicle for school development, but rather an additional commitment.

The areas identified by the emerging code analysis are endorsed by the negative themes arising from the analysis of the Sections E7, E8 and F3. These three sections focus on the achievement of the workplan, the communication between the partners and the impact of the partnerships on it stakeholders and are shown in the table below.

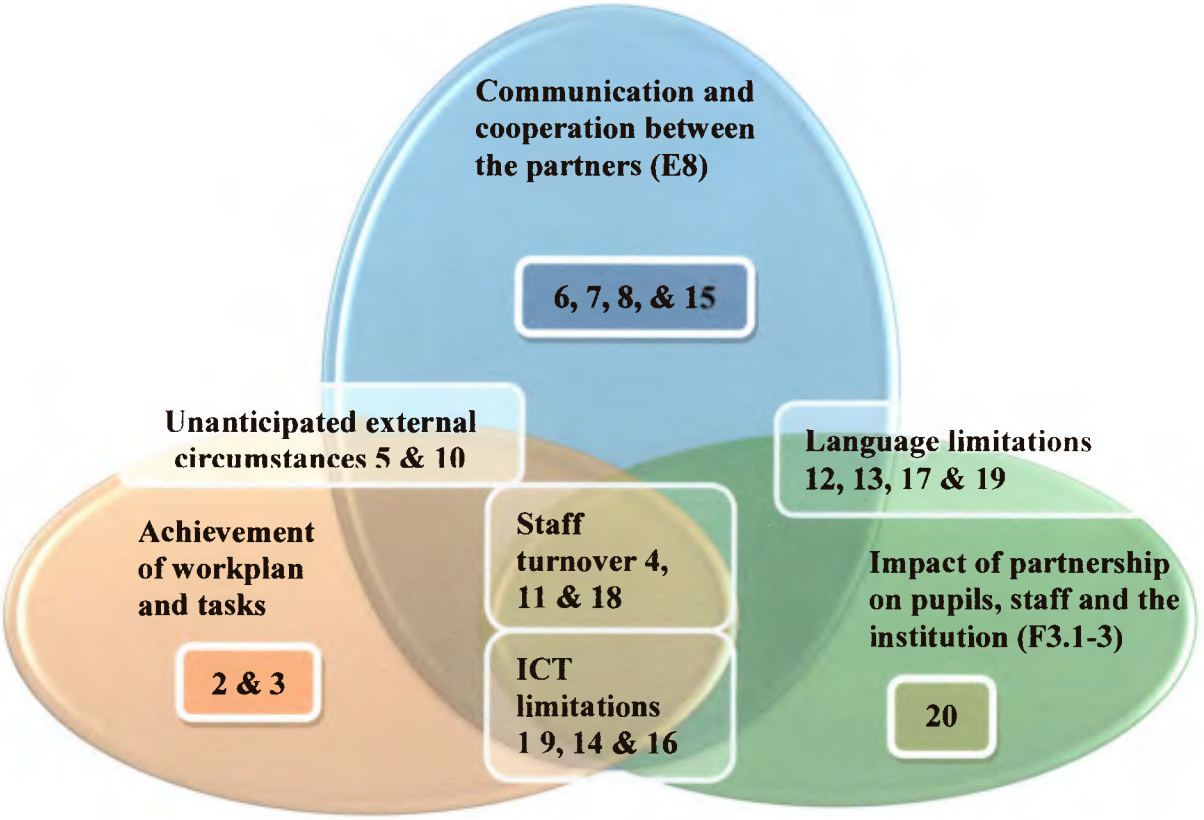
Table 7-5: Showing the negative emerging themes arising from Sections E7, E8 and F3, which are ascribed numbers as keys for the Venn diagram, Figure 7-1.

Key used in Venn diagram	Emerging themes	Section in the Comenius report
1	External circumstances disrupting mobilities (volcanic ash cloud, swine-flu outbreak etc.)	E7
2	Some schools not accepted for partnership, necessitating changes to the workflow.	E7
3	Lack of funding necessitated changes to the workflow	E7
4	Staff turnover	E7
5	Volcanic eruption in Iceland changed the workflow	E7
6	Differing approaches to the same goal	E8
7	Differing school calendars and timetables	E8
8	Differing school finances	E8
9	Difficulties with E-Twinning platform	E8
10	External circumstances disrupting mobilities (volcanic ash cloud, swine-flu outbreak etc.)	E8
11	Mid-project staff turnover	E8
12	Occasional language barriers (re: Bulgaria & Turkey)	E8
13	Occasionally infrequent / inconsistent communications	E8
14	Technical failures of ICT (email, Skype, low-bandwidth)	E8
15	Time constraints preventing implementation of certain	E8

	ideas.	
16	Only a slight increase in IT skills seemed to be reported by most schools	F3.1
17	Language skills did not increase as much as they could have done due to most partners speaking English	F3.1
18	High staff turnover during project	F3.2
19	Language limitations (mitigated somewhat by the main language for the project being English)	F3.2
20	Some schools have relatively inflexible curricula or are legally bound to certain aspects of curriculum prohibiting large scale changes	F3.3

The themes from three sections, which overlap, are summarised in the Venn diagram below. The themes are numbered in the first column in the table above to provide keys for the Venn diagram, Figure 7-1 overleaf. It can be seen that the main difficulties that were identified in the extended textual responses in all three sections relate to staff turnover and ICT limitations. Neither of these feature in the predetermined categories, but both appear in the emerging code analysis. Similarly, certain issues, namely the unexpected external events and the barriers caused by language, that have been identified in Sections E8 and F3 do not appear in the predetermined categories in Section G1, but do appear in the Section G1 emerging codes.

Figure 7-1: Diagram showing the overlap of negative themes arising from extended text in three sections of the Comenius reports



It is important to note that two emerging themes, 16 and 17, indicate that neither the development of a foreign language nor the development of ICT skills were as anticipated. Further guidance to schools may be helpful in alerting them to these issues in advance so that they are prepared to deal with them if and when they arise.

The emerging themes from Section E7 provide some insight as to why goals were not always achieved as planned. These include:

- Issues with funding, which halted some goals
- Issues with ICT, which either resulted in a change in the goals or some being halted.

Other areas for consideration that were identified as emerging themes in Section F can be grouped under two headings:

- Local community engagement:
    - Some companies don't see the benefit in being involved with smaller schools

- The wider catchment area of some SEN schools makes local community impact harder to achieve
- Some schools are in geographically isolated / rural areas making involvement with the wider community very difficult
- Larger schools seemed to have less involvement with local community (possibly as they are more self-sufficient)

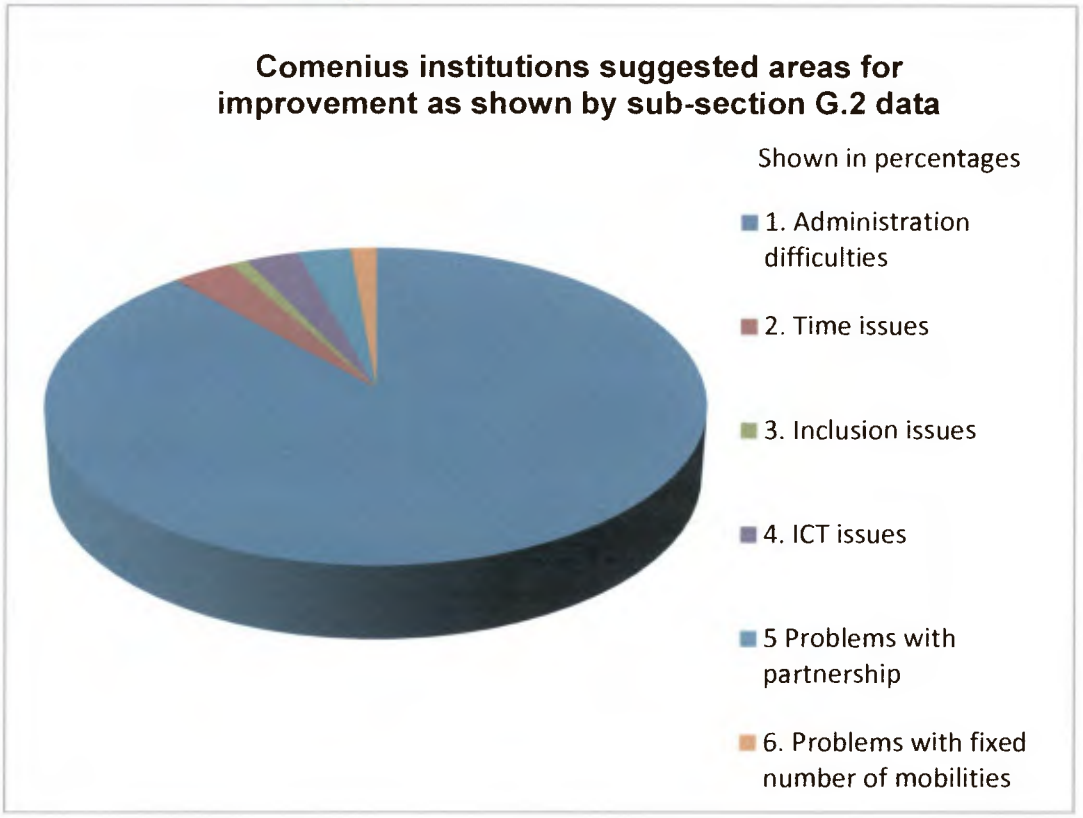
- School families' engagement in the project
  - Some schools reported little impact beyond the families of participating students
  - The need for CRB checks as well as socio-economic factors sometimes stopped families from being totally involved in the project.

The common element of these two groups of problems is the wider engagement in the project. Good advice and guidance may help to resolve some of the difficulties and may result in a sharing of the project management, depending on the leadership model adopted.

7.3. Practitioners' suggestions for improvement

The analysis of Section G2 that invites the authors of the final reports to indicate ways in which the programme and its delivery might be improved identified 11 main areas where difficulties were incurred. These have been grouped into six key categories as shown in the following chart. (See Appendix 15 for further information.)

Chart 7-3: Showing the main categories of suggestions for improvements in the programme and its delivery



The majority of the suggestions do not relate to the partnership itself, but to the processes involved. In particular almost a third concur with the author who stated that 'final report has been very difficult to complete' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-10077). Over 80% of the comments cite difficulties with the reporting, obtaining grants on time and the administrative side of the project. For example, one school stated that:

> *'We found the staff at the British Council to be both responsive and supportive. The major problematic procedure for schools is in respect of the final grant payment. For the final period of any partnership, schools have to fund activities and mobilities from their own resources before final payment is made.*
>
> (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09629-1)

Of those comments that do relate to the partnership, several echo comments raised by those identified in the literature review, such as the frustration and disappointment that an unfulfilled partnership relationship can cause, as expressed in the three extracts below:

> *As a partnership we felt very disappointed that two of the original partners withdrew.*

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09274-1)

The partner school we had difficulty communicating with has received many Comenius grants before, I feel there should be a way to measure how effective partners are before entering into a grant agreement with them, we would certainly link with and continue to communicate with xx, but would not recommend the other partner.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-13837-1)

Unfortunately XX arrived two days after other countries had left which caused a problem for the host country. Their coordinator also changed three times throughout the two year project making communication difficult also.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09210-1)

The disappointment is palpable in all these responses, which accords with Burr's (2007) findings that partnerships do not always result in positive outcomes, and in fact, can leave a legacy of disappointment.

7.4. Summary

In summary, the analysis indicates that there are several key issues for consideration:

a. Staff turnover and staff sickness
b. Unforeseen problems, such as the volcanic ash cloud
c. Lack of time/time management
d. High workload
e. Administrative difficulties, such as the final report template
f. Communication problems, including language difficulties and ICT problems

Suggestions of ways to overcome some of these obstacles to participation can be found in Appendix 15.

7.5. Concluding thoughts

Greater practitioner guidance may help alleviate some of the difficulties identified above. For example, a way of managing some of the time issues might be to encourage a team approach to the project management, so that several members are jointly responsible in the initial application and thereafter in the project. This could become a requirement of the programme, so that an application had to include at least

three signatories and have a declaration by the headteacher guaranteeing full support. In a small school it may be possible to involve parents or governors in running the project in order to spread the workload. Alternatively, collaboration with another local school may be a feasible option. With regard to the unexpected circumstances, the National Agency might take a lead in supporting the development of a detailed risk assessment that includes plans, as far as possible, for the unexpected. This might include terrorism and issues with weather. Although, all schools provide risk assessments for external trips, not all may have the experience of developing them for foreign travel.

In the future, predetermined categories could be extended to include, for example, issues involving staff. The current study might be used as a baseline against which to monitor the effectiveness of additional support provided by the National Agency to address some of the difficulties facing institutions involved in the programme. In this way the effectiveness of supplementary guidance could be evaluated.

Two additional groups of problems identified in Section F indicates that engaging the local community and those parents not directly involved in the project is more difficult for some schools than others. Guidance that includes case-studies and action plans may provide good support to help alleviate these difficulties. Sharing ideas that have worked in other schools, for example by means of a web-based forum or through focused webinars, may also be effective. This could also be done at a strategic level so that schools could use a search engine to identify whether and how schools in other areas had successfully engaged particular businesses in their Comenius projects. Since providing this information for this would take time, consideration could be given as to whether the material supplied could be aligned with the final report so that the originator could cut and paste it in. This would add value to the final report, since some parts could be used to support other schools.

Sharing experiences and the ways in which problems have been resolved are important. For example, during an interview in an earlier study (Cook, 2008c), a Comenius school coordinator was keen to share widely the way in which he had overcome the difficulty of engaging socio-economically deprived families in becoming hosts to the visiting pupils. He had developed an effective plan of support that was applied sensitively. In another school, good publicity of the project meant that many families not involved in the project itself were aware of it and keen to support it at some level. Spreading the awareness of the partnership may also help to spread the workload.

Chapter 8. Review of the learning

My final chapter provides me with the opportunity not only to review the study's methodology and ensure that the research questions have been addressed, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to evaluate my own learning. I will consider these in reverse order and start with my own learning. In this way the reader will be cognisant of the journey I have struggled to make. This journey, which provides the context for my study's review, has been one from a perspective of Enlightenment to entropy.

8.1 My learning

At school I loved all the sciences. I grew to believe there was a truth to uncover, which would unlock a new future. I was truly a child of the Age of Enlightenment. As an adult, in my studies and my work I accepted alternative ways of viewing the world and of analysing information, but for me a database, with the freedom to apply statistical analyses of varying complexities, held the greatest appeal.

In my work I came to know different audiences and their separate needs. One client would require impact demonstrated through narrative, while another wanted quantitative analysis to show value for money. I saw these as different routes, neither superior to the other. Personally, from my objectivist background, I preferred a quantitative approach. I understood the need for Government to provide rigorous evaluation of its expenditure in order to satisfy the UK taxpayers' demands. I saw the need to develop quantitative analysis to demonstrate impact as a natural step within an era of economic downturn. My doctoral studies exposed for me something I had not fully appreciated previously: the perceptions that quantitative and qualitative approaches are not intellectual equals. Vociferous protagonists from each camp argue their points for the high ground[77]. Only now am I beginning to understand the consequences of such beliefs. If policy makers speak one research language and academic researchers use another, the gateway to collaboration is guarded by professional semantics. Overcoming the barriers to communication requires considerable insight, tact and skilled negotiation.

[77] Recently, at a conference I attended at Cambridge University 'Kaleidoscope 2013', Institute of Education, Cambridge University, 31.5.2013', a number of academics were bemoaning the lack of collaboration with policy makers, but they openly acknowledged that they were unwilling to remove the barriers that prevented closer co-operation.

I discovered the rich complexities of the inter-relationships between quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative data informed my analytical framework and the qualitative data helped me to structure the spaces within that analytical framework. Working with both forms concurrently was very challenging, but extremely valuable. Were I to plan my study again, I would structure it differently and remove the silos of quantitative and qualitative analyses. The analysis would become a continuum, because, as my research demonstrates, qualitative and quantitative data are two faces of the same coin and the totality is far greater than the sum of the individual parts. There would be no dichotomy.

My learning journey has been a painful one as I have fallen on the prongs of the dichotomy I mention above. The aim of my thesis was to provide a framework against which a school partnership programme could be evaluated. I knew that this was a challenging task, partly because of the quantity and quality of data available from the school programme, but also because I wanted to develop a new approach to evaluation that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative indicators. I aspired to provide a medium through which 'apples and pears' could be compared; a medium which allowed different aims and ways of measuring variables to be brought together for evaluation. What I failed to realise at the start of my study was that I would have to swim against a tide of antagonism to statistical analysis. The Age of Reason did not prepare me for this, nor did it give me the lifejacket to help me swim to shore. It did, however, present a marker so that I could measure the distance I had travelled, while I learned ways of overcoming the barriers to communication that I mention above.

In the words of Ricoeur (1992, p.1), 'I have undertaken some reflective meditation' in order to understand the pain of my journey. Ricoeur (1992), in his discussion of identity, separates the 'who' from the 'what'. He uses the ipse-idem couplet to distinguish between the personal identity and the 'sameness' identity that remains more constant over time. My thesis caused my ipse-idem couplet to become de-coupled. While my ipse continued to shape and reshape as it reacted to the new learning, my positivist idem retreated, whipped into the corner, as the principles that it employed to underpin the self were deconstructed.

Life for me is a learning journey, but I now know there can be no end to my journey. There is no absolute truth in Kantian terms. My ipse identity can accept this, as it is a work in progress made real by others' reconstruction of my sense of self. However, my idem struggles to relinquish its positivist anchor, though it now does reluctantly acknowledge, as I say in my thesis, that words become 'the point of entry rather than

the totality'. The fact that I can include self in my thesis represents a shift in my theoretical perspective, but I fear that my idem now understands it needs to be more sly in managing its core sameness!

My journey has shed a new light, but one that is less bright than the old. I now understand less than I did, but can say more! I will use both my old and my new paradigms to review my study.

8.2 Addressing the research questions

Two main questions frame this study, each of which comprise a number of aspects, as considered below.

8.2.1 The indicators of a successful international school partnership

A theoretical standard has been constructed using factors that are identified in an extensive literature review as contributing to successful international school links. The OTS provides a framework that enables different entities to be compared. The comparisons have incorporated key educational drivers in the UK, and Comenius indicators and outcomes. Analysis has verified that the theoretical standard encompasses indicators of successful school partnerships that are applicable in practice in a wide variety of contexts and perspectives. The OTS has provided a framework that can be used to align a range of aims, indicators, outputs, outcomes and impact. It provides a common comparator that overcomes differences and enables meaningful measurements to be made.

8.2.2 The extent to which Comenius school partnerships are successful

The Comenius data has been used effectively to test the practical applicability of the OTS and clearly identifies where school partnerships can deliver school improvement. The analysis demonstrates that the outcomes and impact of the Comenius partnerships, as identified by the practitioners, align closely with the indicators in the OTS, which are drawn from the literature review. The study establishes that Comenius is very good at promoting successful international school partnerships. The programme is not a change agent for the curriculum, but enhances it.

Key findings arising from the data analysis identifies the Comenius programme as an effective vehicle to support two major educational drivers:

- **Developing a workforce with the necessary skills to live and work in a global economy**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a recent report by the CBI (Nathan, 2011, p. 22) highlights the fact that 61% of employers 'perceive shortfalls in international cultural awareness among school and college leavers'. The report clearly indicates that business leaders see global education for young people as vital if the UK is to compete in the global economy.

Compelling evidence indicates that Comenius international school partnerships develop multicultural awareness in learners and enhances the curriculum.

- **Professional development for teachers**

Raising standards in education is a key issue. Good teaching leads to good learning (Ofsted, 2012b).

Strong evidence validates the claim that Comenius international school partnerships provide the opportunity for good professional development that motivates staff, increases intercultural understanding and promotes good working relationships across the school.

Examination of the barriers to effective international school partnerships indicate that key issues include the workload involved in managing the partnership and staff turnover. I have made some recommendations[78] of ways of overcoming these, including one that requires a project team of at least three individuals to be identified in the proposal.

Other recommendations of mine for the Comenius programme, which will provide an opportunity for professional reflection, include:

- The provision of a self-evaluation framework with criteria for assessment to enable institutions to self-assess against a benchmark
- The development of community partners at a strategic level so that schools can partner with branches at a local level

[78] See Appendix 21 for more detail.

- The requirement that all partners write a short section, in a format that cannot be edited, on the effectiveness of the partnership from their perspective. This can be uploaded by their partner when completing the final report.
- Coordinators should be encouraged to share their expertise on an electronic platform, so that others can search for solutions. A hyperlink to the coordinator's web content could then be pasted into the final report to answer some of the report's questions.

The study shows that Comenius data supports the universality of the theoretical standard, as shown by the close alignment of the data with the cogs of the operationalized standard. While this does not confirm that all international school partnership programmes can utilise the standard, it does indicate that the standard has 'passed its first practical application test'. In this case the theory has been shown to match practice.

8.3 A review of the methodology

I have now answered my research questions and having reflected on my approach to the research, I believe that, from my perspective, objectivism provides an effective epistemology for the creation of a theoretical standard for successful school partnerships. The outcomes use a language that accords with the expectations and understanding of those for whom the study is written. My mixed methodology has enabled me to capture context and content. It has enabled me to deliver a study which I believe is replicable. Other countries can apply the methodology provided here to evaluate their Comenius projects, and other programmes in the UK can adopt the theoretical standard to evaluate the quality of their partnerships. My idem is satisfied, but my ipse constructs new understanding that, were I to repeat such a study, would alter my approach. In truth, this dissertation could be divided into two theses.

When I first developed the methodology for my study, I believed that the secondary data, provided by the Comenius final reports, offered the prospect of answering the research questions I posed. The collective feedback of the project coordinators in their reports was sufficient in quantity and quality to provide good evidence for the study. I not only read the reports as individual cases, but I also interrogated variables against their context and collated indicators from each report for analysis. Individual secondary data cases were rewarding to study and helped to shape the way in which I analysed the data, but this aspect of the analysis required a very large amount of dedicated time,

which is likely to be a constraining factor were the exercise to be repeated. As I read the reports I was struck by the differences rather than the similarities. How differently people constructed their understanding of the questionnaire in the absence of clear guidance. I came to wonder whether answers could be collated, and whether the different contexts from which the answers were proffered actually negated any summation of the information. This led me to consider whether the authors were reporting on their experiences or whether, as they completed their reports, they were in fact creating a different reality. Was the project effectively portrayed in the report, or did the report writing create a new reality? At the start of the study, my research identity did not anticipate such questions and therefore the methodology did not incorporate onsite school visits. Although the size of the database gave me confidence that any skewness would not have a major impact on the analysis and the risk of kurtosis leading to an underestimation of variance was reasonably low, I was acutely aware of the shortcomings of the data that I identify in Chapter 6. The first of these is the lack of guidance for the report writers, which makes any detailed comparison between the cases difficult. The second is that the quality rating awarded to the project is only a proxy indictor of the project's outcomes and therefore has limited value in ascertaining the quality of the project. The last one is the too frequent absence of the other school's voice. On reflection school visits would have strengthened the study and helped to resolve some of the issues above.

At the beginning of the study I said that a successful partnership was one that was perceived to be successful by its stakeholders. At that time I meant all its stakeholders, including its partner schools in different countries. As I worked through the data I realised that the voice of the other stakeholders was not clear. Where partnerships continued, even though the funding had ceased, I took this as a positive affirmation by the stakeholders that the link was successful, but this was not apparent in many cases. I did not take the view that the absence of a continuing relationship necessarily meant that the partnership had not been successful. There were many external factors, such as financial issues and school capacity, that might prevent a future link, and the writer might not mention it, even if it were to occur. However, I am very conscious that this must be addressed in any future study, and have included in my recommendations ways of capturing the partner school's voice in order to provide a less UK centric view of the link.

The issues that I have outlined above persuade me that were the study to be replicated, two important revisions should be incorporated. Firstly, visits to a number of schools should be incorporated into the methodology to observe their partnerships in

practice. Secondly, the views expressed in the reports must be triangulated with those of their partner institutions. This improved mixed method approach would satisfy my ipse, while appeasing my idem.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation criteria for Comenius partnerships

Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013
SUBPROGRAMME
Multilateral / Bilateral Partnerships
Model: ASSESSMENT FORM of FINAL REPORT 2008 - 2010

Grant agreement number:
Project title:
Organisation name:
Date of receipt of the report:
Assessor's name:

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

Checklist

Formal requirements	
Standard Final Report form fully completed	Yes / No
Input in EST database	Yes / No
Signed by the legal representative	Yes / No

Comments:

If at least one "No":
Date of request for additional information:
Date of receipt of additional information:

Content of the project

PART A: concerning the partnership as a whole

Aims and results (section A2 of Final Report)	**Evaluation**
Expected aims were achieved	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Outcomes/Results have been achieved as planned	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments*:	

*In case of major modification of the project, has it been justified in the report?

Communication and cooperation: (section A3 of Final Report)	**Evaluation**
Cooperation and participation of partners were efficient	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Communication between partners was appropriate	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments:	

Evaluation and monitoring: (section A4 of Final Report)	**Evaluation**
Evaluation and monitoring activities on the progress and impact of the partnership were carried out	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments:	

Specific measures (section A5 of Final Report)	**Evaluation**
Planned activities for specific measures were undertaken (if applicable)	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments:	

Identification of projects (for yearly report or valorisation)	**Evaluation***
For COM: The project focused on	Yes/No
Combating discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.	
Other (e.g. the theme of the European Year)	
Comments:	

PART B: concerning the NA's Institution

Activities (section B7of Final Report)	**Evaluation**
Activities were in line with the partnership's objectives	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Quality of activities carried out	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments:	

Impact and Sustainability (section B8 of Final Report) The partnership project has an impact on :	**Evaluation**
Pupils / learners / trainees	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Teachers / trainers / staff	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
School / organisation	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Local community	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Other (if applicable, please specify in the comments)	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments:	

Dissemination and Exploitation of Results (section B9 of Final Report)	**Evaluation**
Measures have been implemented to ensure dissemination and use of results	Very good / Satisfactory / Weak
Comments:	

Overall comments Once the evaluation has been completed, the evaluator should write a short summary giving overall impression on the quality of the partnership and outlining the key strengths and weaknesses. These comments must be consistent with any scores awarded and serve as input to provide feedback to applicants. Particular attention should be given to clarity, consistency and appropriate level of detail and should be written in the language of the Partnership application, or in English, in a polite and neutral tone.
Strengths: Weaknesses: Other:

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT: VERY GOOD / SATISFACTORY / WEAK
PARTNERSHIP COULD BE BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE YES / NO

Comments:

Financial assessment:

For bilateral partnerships: exchange conditions respected	Yes / No

Partnership type[79]	**Number of eligible mobilities**[80]	**Number of ineligible mobilities**
Comments:		

Special needs	
Awarded	Yes / No
Carried out	Yes / No
Comments:	

Overseas mobilities	
Awarded	Yes / No
Carried out	Yes / No
Comments:	

A. Total grant awarded:	Euro
B. Minimum number of required mobilities:	mobilities
C. 80% prefinancing grant received:	Euro
D. Total number of eligible mobilities carried out:	mobilities
E. Total final grant: **(see example calculation in annex 3 of the contract)**	Euro
F. Balance to be paid/refunded:	Euro to be paid/refunded (delete as appropriate)
Comments:	

Date of assessment: .....

Signature of assessor/s:.....

[79] See the Grant Agreement.

[80] I.e. took place between 1 August 2008 and 31 July 2010, to a transnational partner organisation funded for the same Partnership; was relevant to the objectives of the Partnership and involved staff and/or learners and/or associated partners of the organisation. For Comenius bilateral partnerships

Appendix 2: Comenius final report form

Report Form
Call: 2009
Partnerships
Form version: 2.7 / Adobe Reader version: 10.001

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Please send this report to your National Agency, duly completed and signed by 30 September 2011. This report is considered as your request for payment of the balance of the grant. Please check Annex III of your grant agreement for a detailed explanation of the calculation of the final grant amount.

B. SUBMISSION

Programme	LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME
Sub-programme	COMENIUS
Action type	PARTNERSHIPS
Action	COMENIUS Multilateral school partnerships
Call	2009
Working language of the partnership	EN - English

B.1. PROJECT IDENTIFIERS

Grant agreement no.	
Project title	
Project acronym	
National Id	
Form hash code	C0007A7A5BAC7A5F

B.2. NATIONAL AGENCY

Identification	UK1 LLP-Com-Era (BRITISH COUNCIL)
Postal address	Comenius Applications British Council 10 Spring Gardens London SW1A 2BN
Email address	Comenius.Applications@britishcouncil.org
Helpdesk	Comenius@britishcouncil.org

C. IDENTIFICATION OF THE BENEFICIARY

C.1. BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

Role	
Full legal name (national language)	
Full legal name (latin characters)	
Acronym	
National id (if applicable)	
Type of organisation	
Scope	
Legal status	
Size (staff)	
Size (pupils)	
Legal address	
Postal code	
City	
Country	
Region	
Telephone 1	
Telephone 2	
Fax	
Email	
Website	

Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Report Form

Call: 2009

Partnerships

Form version: 2.7 / Adobe Reader version: 10.001

C.2. CONTACT PERSON

Title	
First name	
Family name	
Department	
Position	
Work address	
Postal code	
City	
Country	
Telephone 1	
Telephone 2	
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	

C.3. LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Title	
First name	
Family name	
Organisation	
Department	
Position	
Work address	
Postal code	
City	
Country	
Telephone 1	
Telephone 2	
Fax	
Email	

C.4. SOURCE OF INFORMATION

At application stage how did you find information about partnerships?

+ -

Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Report Form
Call: 2009
Partnerships

Form version: 2.7 / Adobe Reader version: 10.001

D. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTNERS

D.1. PARTNER ORGANISATION

National Agency identification	
Role	
Full legal name (national language)	
Full legal name (latin characters)	
Acronym	
National id (if applicable)	
Type of organisation	
Scope	
Legal status	
Size (staff)	
Size (pupils)	
Legal address	
Postal code	
City	
Country	
Region	
Telephone 1	
Telephone 2	
Fax	
Email	
Website	

****REPEATED FOR EACH PARTNER IN THE PROJECT****

E. PART A (CONCERNING THE PARTNERSHIP AS A WHOLE)

E.1. SUMMARY

Please provide a brief description of the partnership carried out in the communication language of the partnership (maximum of 5000 characers). The provided summary may be used for publication.

Translation of Summary into English.

E.2. OUTCOMES

Please fill the following table with the outcomes produced by your partnership.

Identifier	1
Type	
Title	
Description	
Date (dd-mm-yyyy)	
Educational field	
Topics	+ -
Target group(s)/potential beneficiaries	+ -
Languages	+ -
Source	
Creator	
Publisher	
Coverage	

Copyright/Rights	
Target sectors	+ -
Medias used	+ -

Add outcome | Remove outcome

E.3. EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

What was the added value of the partnership towards a more intensive European cooperation?

E.4. PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES ACHIEVEMENTS

Please summarise briefly **the main aims/objectives of your partnership.**

E.5. KEY COMPETENCES

Please enter the specific key competences **addressed by your partnership.**

+ -

Please specify any concrete measures and activities undertaken at partnership level.

E.6. HORIZONTAL ISSUES

Please enter the horizontal issues addressed by your partnership.

- ☐ Promoting an awareness of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe, as well as of the need to combat racism, prejudice and xenophobia (Div)
- ☐ Cultural and linguistic diversity (CulDiv)
- ☐ Fight against racism and xenophobia (RacXen)
- ☐ Making provision for learners with special needs, and in particular by helping to promote their integration into mainstream education and training (SpecNeed)
- ☐ Promoting equality between men and women and contributing to combating all forms of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Discr)
- ☐ Equal opportunities men and women (Equal)
- ☐ Sexual discrimination, orientation (SexDis)
- ☐ Racial or ethnic origin (RacEth)
- ☐ Age (Age)

If other, please specify.

Please specify any concrete measures and activities undertaken at partnership level.

E.7. WORKPLAN AND TASKS

If some of the tasks carried out are different form those planned at application stage, please explain why.

E.8. COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

How would you describe the cooperation and communication between the participating organisations involved in your partnership? Were all organisations equally involved?

E.9. PARTNERSHIP LANGUAGES

Please enter the communication and working languages used in the partnership.

+ -

E.10. EVALUATION

E.10.1. PROGRESS MONITORING

How did you monitor and evaluate the progress and the expected impact of the partnership?

What were the main conclusions and consequences of the monitoring and evaluation?

E.10.2. RESULTS/PRODUCTS/OUTCOMES ACHIEVEMENT

To what extent were results/products/outcomes previously identified at application stage achieved?

E.10.3. AIMS/OBJECTIVES ACHIEVEMENT

To what extent were the aims/objectives previously stated at application stage achieved?

In case of underachievement, please explain which aims/objectives were not achieved and for what reasons.

F. PART B (CONCERNING YOUR OWN INSTITUTION)

F.1. PARTICIPANTS

F.1.1. ACTIVITIES

Please enter the details about the number of participants from your institution involved in partnership activities and mobilities.

Type	Gender	No. of Pupils/ Learners/Trainees	Out of which No. of Pupils/Learners/Trainees With Special Needs	No. of Teachers/Staff	Out of which No. of Teachers/Staff With Special Needs	No. of Accompanying Persons
LOCAL ACTIVITIES	Male					
	Female					
TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITIES	Male					
	Female					

F.1.2. AGE RANGES

Please enter the number of Pupils/Learners/Trainees by age range.

Age Range	No. of Pupils / Learners / Trainers

+ -

F.2. PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Please enter the concrete activities carried out by your organisation at local level and during the mobilities.

Activity No.	1
Description	
Activity type	
Start date (dd-mm-yyyy)	
Duration (days)	
Actors involved	

Add activity Remove activity

F.3. IMPACTS

F.3.1. PUPILS/LEARNERS/TRAINEES

What impact did the partnership have on the pupils/learners/trainees?

AREA	RATING
Increased language skills (Pupil-Lang)	
Increased ICT skills (Pupil-ICT)	
Increased social skills (Pupil-Social)	
Increased motivation (Pupil-Motiv)	
Increased self-confidence (Pupil-Self)	
Increased knowledge about partner countries and cultures (Pupil-Culture)	
Other (Pupil-Oth)	

Please comment on your choices.

F.3.2. TEACHERS/STAFF

What impact did the partnership have on the teachers/staff?

AREA	RATING
Increased language skills (Staff-Lang)	
Increased ICT skills (Staff-ICT)	
Increased pedagogical skills (Staff-Pedag)	
Increased motivation (Staff-Motiv)	
Increased project management skills (Staff-PrjMng)	
Increased knowledge about partner countries and cultures (Staff-Culture)	
Other (Staff-Oth)	

Please comment on your choices.

F.3.3. ORGANISATION

What impact did the partnership have on your organisation?

AREA	RATING
Changes to the curriculum/training programme (Home-Curr)	
Changes to organisational arrangements (Home-Org)	
Increase support of the organisation management (Home-Supp)	
Changes in language teaching policy (Home-LangPol)	
Increased cooperation among staff (Home-StaffCoop)	
Other (Home-Oth)	

Please comment on your choices.

F.3.4. LOCAL COMMUNITY

What impact did the partnership have on the local community?

AREA	RATING
Increased support and participation of family members (Local-Family)	
Increased cooperation with other local organisations (Local-Coop)	
Increased cooperation with local companies (Local-Comp)	
Increased support and participation of other local actors (Local-Actor)	
Other (Local-Oth)	

Please comment on your choices.

F.3.5. OTHER IMPACTS

Please describe any other impact you have noted.

(max: 2500 characters)

F.4. DISSEMINATION

How have you informed your organisation/other organisations/the local community of the results of your partnership?

+ -

Please specify the dissemination activities carried out.

F.5. SUSTAINABILITY

How do you think that the outcomes of your partnership could be used by others?

F.6. MOBILITY PARTICIPATION

Mobility Type of Grant Awarded	COM-12M
Number of Reduced Mobilities (due to staff or pupils/learners/trainees with special needs or travel to or from Overseas Countries and Territories)	

Please enter the mobility participation details.

Mobility No.	1
Host Organisation	
Receiving Country	
Receiving Location	
Description	
Start date (dd-mm-yyyy)	
End date (dd-mm-yyyy)	
Duration (days)	
No. of Pupils/Learners/Trainees	
Out of Which No. of Pupils/Learners/Trainees With Special Needs	
No. of Staff	
Out of Which No. of Staff With Special Needs	
No. of Accompanying Persons	

F.6.1. MOBILITY PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Total No. of Pupils/ Learners/Trainees	Out of which Total No. of Pupils/ Learners/Trainees With Special Needs	Total No. of Staff	Out of which Total No. of Staff With Special Needs	Total No. of Accompanying Persons

G. LESSONS LEARNED

G.1. PROBLEMS/OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED

If applicable, please **describe any** difficulty you encountered before/during/after the Partnership and how they were solved.

+ -

Please enter here any other comments you may have.

G.2. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Please provide any further comments you might wish to make to the National Agency or the European Commission on the management and implementation of Comenius/Grundtvig/Leonardo da Vinci Partnerships' projects (such as recommendation for future measures, administrative procedures, level of funding, etc.).

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H. EU FUNDING

Partner organisation	National Agency of the organisation	Partnership type	No. of realised mobilities (pupils/ learners)	No. of realised mobilities (staff)	Total No. of realised mobilities
	UK1 LLP-Com-Era (BRITI	COM-12M	0	12	12

I. DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The grant application will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Information provided by the applicants necessary in order to assess their grant application will be processed solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the programme concerned. On the applicant's request, personal data may be sent to the applicant to be corrected or completed. Any question relating to these data, should be addressed to the appropriate Agency to which the form must be submitted. Beneficiaries may lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor at anytime.

http://www.edps.europa.eu/

J. GRANT HOLDER'S DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

To be signed by the person legally authorised to sign on behalf of your institution/organisation and by the partnership contact person in your institution/organisation.

We, the undersigned, certify that the information contained in this Final Report is correct to the best of our knowledge and we herewith request the balance payment of the grant awarded.

Place: _____ Date: _____

Name of the contact person (in capital letters): _____

Position of the contact person (in capital letters): _____

Signature of the contact person: _____

Place: _____ Date: _____

Name of the Head of Institution/Organisation (in capital letters): _____

Position of the Head of Institution/Organisation: _____

Signature of the Head of Institution/Organisation: _____

Stamp of the Institution/Organisation:

K. SUBMISSION

Before submitting the form electronically, please validate it. Please note that only the final version of your form should be submitted electronically.

K.1. DATA VALIDATION

Validation of compulsory fields and rules — Validate

K.2. SUBMISSION SUMMARY

This table provides additional information (log) of all form submission attempts, particularly useful for the National Agencies in case of multiple form submissions.

Number	Time	Event	Form hash code	Status
1	2011-07-07 09:25:21 *	Form has not been submitted yet	C0007A7A5BAC7A5F	Unknown

* means local PC time, which is not trusted and cannot be used for claiming that the form has been submitted in time

K.3. STANDARD SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Online submission (requires internet connection) — Submit online

Print the form — Print form

K.4. ALTERNATIVE SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Creates a file to be sent by email to the National Agency — Create email attachment

(To be used ONLY if online submission is not available. Please see instructions about this procedure in the "Applicant Guide")

****Additional Question for Bilateral Partnerships Only****

F.3. LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Please enter the details about any language preparation courses carried out.

Activity No.	1
Description	
Language	
Provider	
Methodology	
Start date (dd-mm-yyyy)	
End date (dd-mm-yyyy)	
No. of Hours	
No. of Pupils	
Proficiency Level Achieved	
Plans for Language Integration into the Curriculum	

Appendix 3: Comenius 2007/8 priorities

Lifelong Learning Programme

2007 NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR COMENIUS AND GRUNDTVIG PARTNERSHIPS IN THE LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME

UK

COMENIUS PARTNERSHIPS AND GRUNDTVIG PARTNERSHIPS

There are four specific UK priorities. We particularly welcome applications which address one or more of these areas:

- To increase and widen participation:
- To encourage greater exchange of learners, trainees, researchers and teaching staff:
- To increase the development of skills for employment: and
- To promote the transfer and recognition of qualifications.

For the first of these we would like to see **groups who are currently under-represented in programmes** take a much greater part. We particularly welcome applications from groups representing older learners, those with few or no formal qualifications, looked after children, socially excluded groups, travellers, refugees, those living in rural or deprived inner city areas, those with disabilities, minority ethnic groups and those unemployed or at economic disadvantage. All of these groups could find involvement in international programmes very beneficial.

To improve the level of exchange we would like institutions responsible for learners, trainees, researchers and teaching staff to **develop strategies that encourage greater international experience**. The support of their management would be a huge incentive to increased involvement and raise the profile of the programmes.

Employers need to ensure that their workers have the skills necessary to keep businesses competitive, whilst the individual employees (and those not working) need to develop those skills to enhance their employability and to be personally fulfilled. **A European dimension to the training** can be a significant help in reaching these goals

There is still a long way to go to make qualifications that have been obtained in one country easily accepted in another. Potential employers need to be satisfied that standards are similar. We would welcome projects which help **qualifications to be recognised and accepted** in countries other than where they are obtained so that workers and learners can move freely within the EU and beyond

National award criteria

National award criteria are the national priorities that will be given extra weighting at the selection stage. Please indicate any national priorities for Comenius as regards target groups, thematic areas, etc. in each of the actions. Try to be as precise as possible in your wording and indicate clearly if there are differences in the weighting of the priorities. If you use geographical priorities, specify which regions will be given priority (instead of e.g. referring to "geographical balance" in general terms).

General Priorities

For all Comenius actions, from 2008 priority will be given to:

- Activity focussed around or supporting under-represented groups (including ethnic minorities persons from socio-economically deprived areas, Travellers, looked-after children and persons with special needs)
- Applicants from areas demonstrating low-take up of Comenius activity, in particular London, Scotland and East Anglia
- Activity which supports the participation of further education colleges and/or special schools
- Activity which supports language teaching and learning.

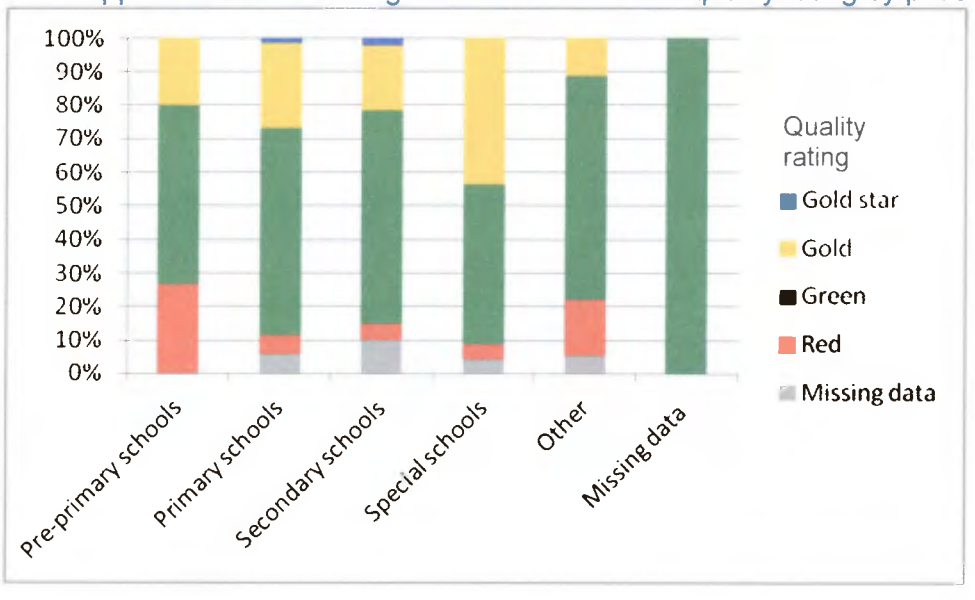
****

Appendix 4: Analysis of the quality of the Comenius reports by school phase

Analysis of the cross-tabulation of Comenius institutions by phase and quality rating for the final report shows that schools for pupils with special educational needs have a higher proportion of reports assessed as being of gold quality than do the other categories. As seen in the stacked column chart below only primary and secondary schools achieved gold stars. Three primary schools and four secondary schools, of which one gained a double star, were awarded this high accolade. Institutions from pre-primary to secondary level all have very good (gold), satisfactory (green) and weak (red) reports.

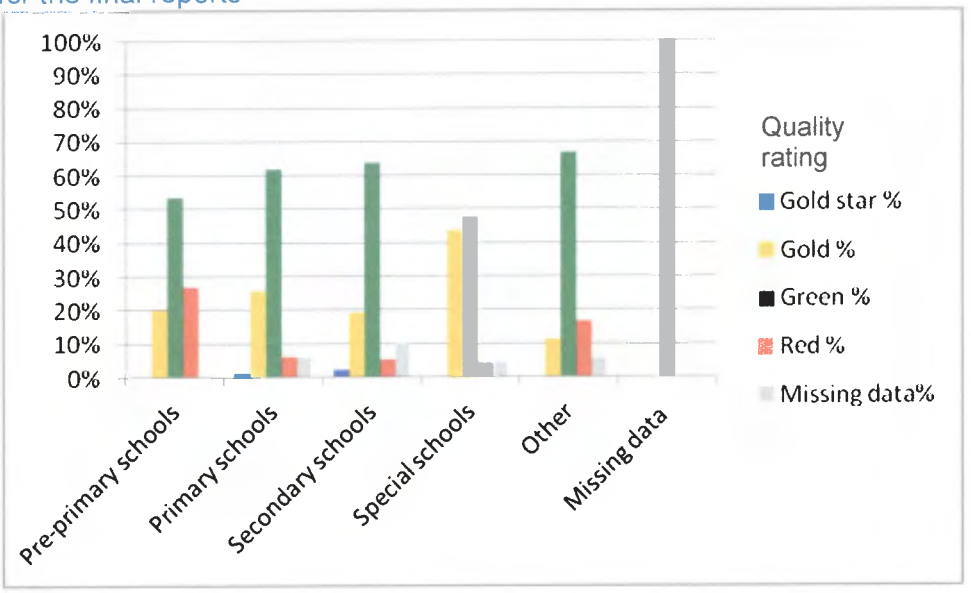
The missing data for the school phase on the 'x' axis refers to cases where the type of school was missing. The missing data under the quality rating classification refers to cases where the phase was recorded but the quality rating was not identified. The 'other' category comprises one of each of the following: vocational training centre, non university higher education, institution for initial teacher training and a university or higher education institution.

Chart Appendix 4.1: Showing the breakdown of the quality rating by phase of school



Although the profiles are not that dissimilar, the following chart demonstrates that there is a small difference in the quality ratings between primary and secondary as seen in the percentage breakdown. Primary schools achieve more final reports judged to be gold and slightly less green than do the secondary schools category.

Chart Appendix 4.2: Showing the school phase by the breakdown of quality ratings for the final reports



Appendix 5: Organisations and Web addresses

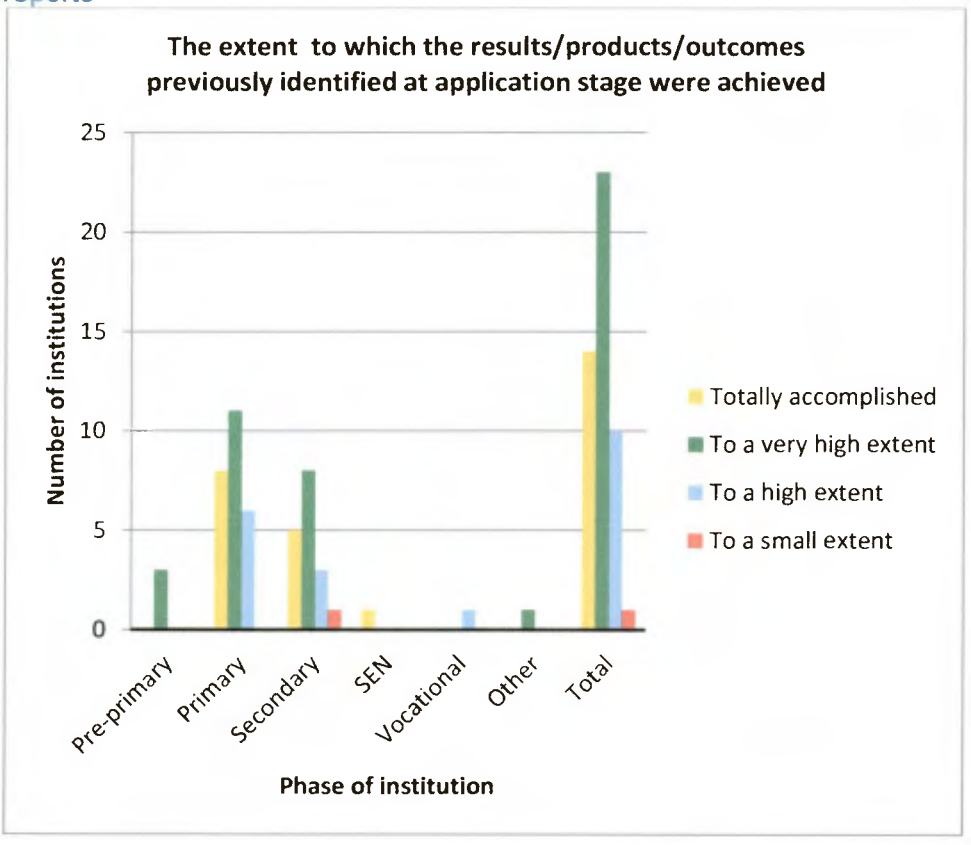
International qualifications	International Baccalaureate: International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)	http://www.ibo.org/; www.edexcel.com/quals/igcse/igcse09; http://www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/middlesec/igcse/subjects; www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk/course/igcse;
UK organisations e.g.	Achievers International	http://www.achieversinternational.org/
	British Council - e.g. Comenius, Connecting Classrooms, E-Twinning, International Schools Award, Global School Partnerships	www.britishcouncil.org; http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/home
	BBC World Class	http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/
	Childreach International - My school, my voice	http://www.childreach.org.uk/
	Development Direct Global Partnerships	http://www.developmentdirect.org.uk/
	Eden Project - Gardens for Life	http://www.edenproject.com/
	Global School Partnerships	www.dfid.gov.uk/globalschools
	Intuitive Media	http://www.intuitivemedia.com/
	The Japan Society	http://www.japansociety.org.uk/schools/
	Link Community Development	http://www.lcdinternational.org/
	Link Ethiopia	http://www.linkethiopia.org/index.html
	The Motse Project	http://www.motse-project.org/
	One World Link	http://www.oneworldlink.org.uk/primary_1/index.html
	Pahar Trust	http://www.pahar-trust.org/
	Rafi.ki	http://www.rafi.ki/site/
	Sabre Trust	http://www.sabretrust.org/
	Sound Affects	http://www.soundaffects.org.uk/
	UK-German Connection	http://www.ukgermanconnection.org/?location_id=2146
	UKOWLA	http://www.ukowla.org.uk/
National organisations e.g.	Think Global	http://www.think-global.org.uk/
	Cyfanfyd	http://www.cyfanfyd.org.uk/welcome-to-cyfanfyd/about-cyfanfyd/
	Dolen Cymru	http://www.dolencymru.org/
	Wales Africa Community Links	www.walesafrica.org/funding

	International Development Education Association of Scotland	http://www.ideas-forum.org.uk/
	Scotland Malawi Partnership	http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/education.html?display=partnerships-about
	Centre for Global Education	http://www.centreforglobaleducation.com/

Appendix 6: Analysis of the levels of achievement based on a sample of reports

The following analysis is based on a sample of 48 reports. This sample was stratified by the quality of the final report, which is based on judgements made by an independent 'panel of experts' (British Council, 2009, p. Section K3). The cases were randomly selected within the strata. The following charts and tables supplement those in the main report.

Chart Appendix 6.1: Showing the level of achievement of the Comenius projects' outputs and outcomes broken down by school phase, based on a sample of 2010 final reports



It can be seen that primary and secondary schools show broadly similar achievement profiles with regards to their projected outputs and outcomes. The number totally accomplishing their anticipated results (coloured gold above) is less than those closely approaching their projected outputs and outcomes (coloured green), but is greater than those achieving them less fully (shown in pale blue).

Chart Appendix 6.2 below indicates the percentage of schools achieving each level within their phase. Table Appendix 6.1 shows the degree to which each phase of institution is represented in the sample varies. Since the numbers in some of the sample groups are very small no comparison should be made between the different phases other than primary and secondary. However, it can be noted that the pre-primary schools in the sample, which represent 20% of the population of pre-primary schools that submitted a final report in 2010 for their Comenius work, all indicate that they had almost achieved all that they had planned. There was only one school for pupils with special educational needs in the sample, and it fully achieved its proposed outputs and outcomes.

Chart Appendix 6.2: Showing the level of achievement of the Comenius projects' outputs and outcomes broken down by school phase (%), based on a sample of 2010 final reports

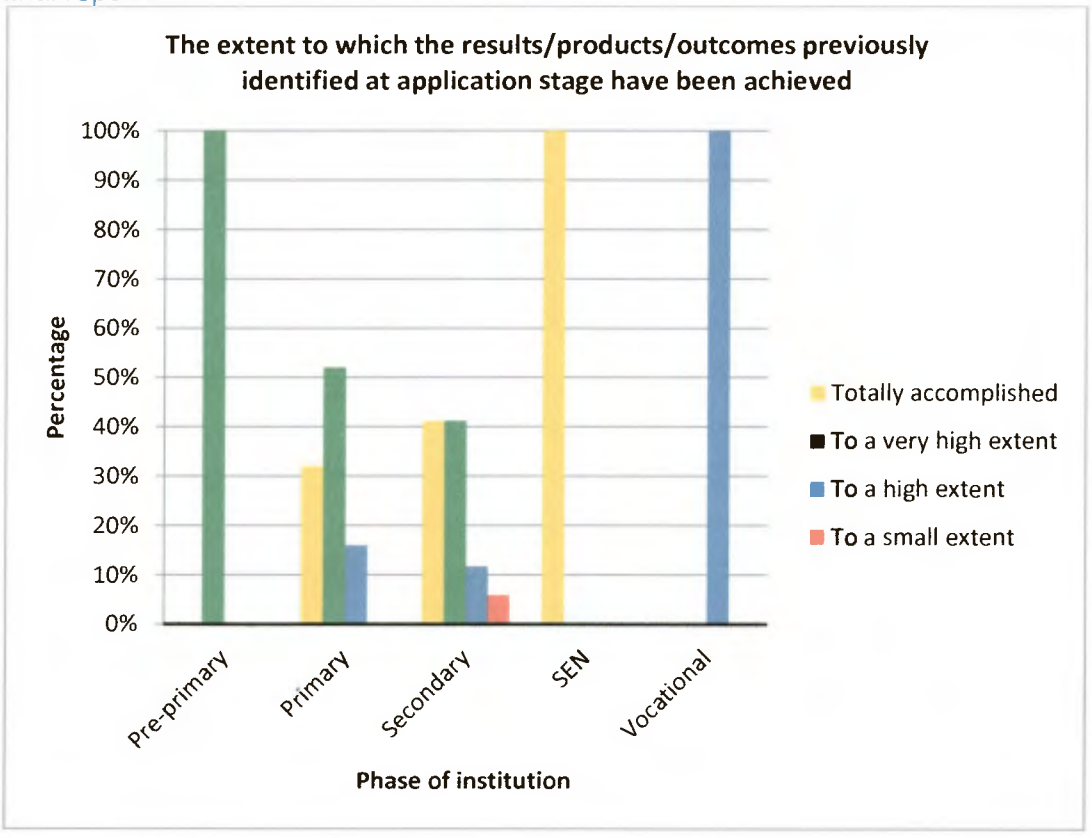


Table Appendix 6-1 Showing the sample and population by phase of the institution

School phase	Sample	Sample % breakdown by phase	Population of 2010 reports broken down by phase	Population of 2010 reports % breakdown by phase	Sample % representation of population by phase
pre-primary school	3	6.25%	15	3.11%	20.0%
primary school	25	52.08%	245	50.72%	10.2%
secondary school	17	35.42%	181	37.47%	9.4%
special	1	2.08%	23	4.76%	4.3%
other	2	4.17%	18	3.73%	11.1%
	48	100.00%	482	99.79%	10.0%

It can be seen from the information above that although a greater percentage of secondary schools totally achieve their planned outputs and outcomes than primary schools, more primary schools nearly achieve their projected targets. This means that overall, when the top two categories are combined (that is the yellow and green bars above) primary and secondary schools have broadly similar achievements in terms of their partnership outputs and outcomes.

Chart Appendix 6.3 below shows a different profile for primary and secondary schools in the achievement of the aims and objectives identified in their application forms. Once again, in the secondary phase the number totally accomplishing their aims is very similar to those almost achieving them. Viewing this information as percentages, as shown in Chart Appendix 6.4, it appears that both primary and secondary schools perform equally well in achieving the majority of the aims and objectives (i.e. the blue and red categories) for their Comenius projects. Of the primary schools 84% (i.e. 32% + 52%) accomplish to a very high extent or better their anticipated aims and objectives, while 82.4% (i.e. 41.2% + 41.2%) of the secondary schools achieve this. This is confirmed by the weak relationship between the level of achievement of the aims and objectives and the phase of the institution as identified using Pearson correlation, where the coefficient is 0.215 as shown in the Table Appendix 6.2.

Chart Appendix 6.3: Showing a breakdown of the level of achievement of the aims and objectives by the phase of institution, based on a sample of 2010 final reports

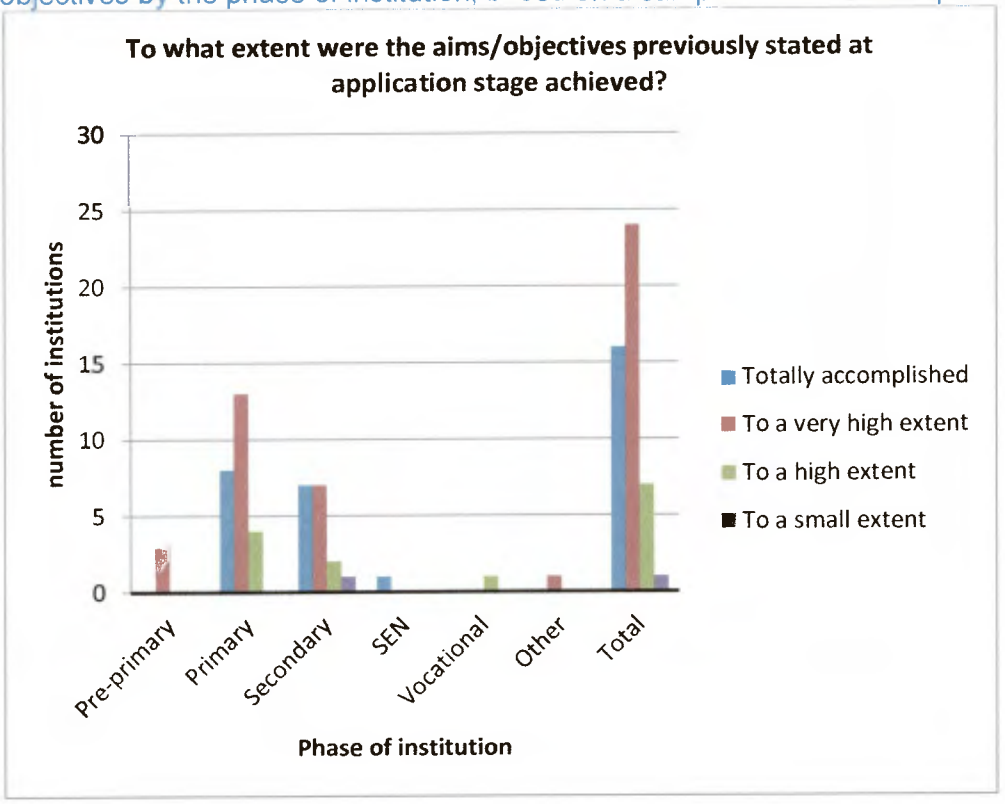
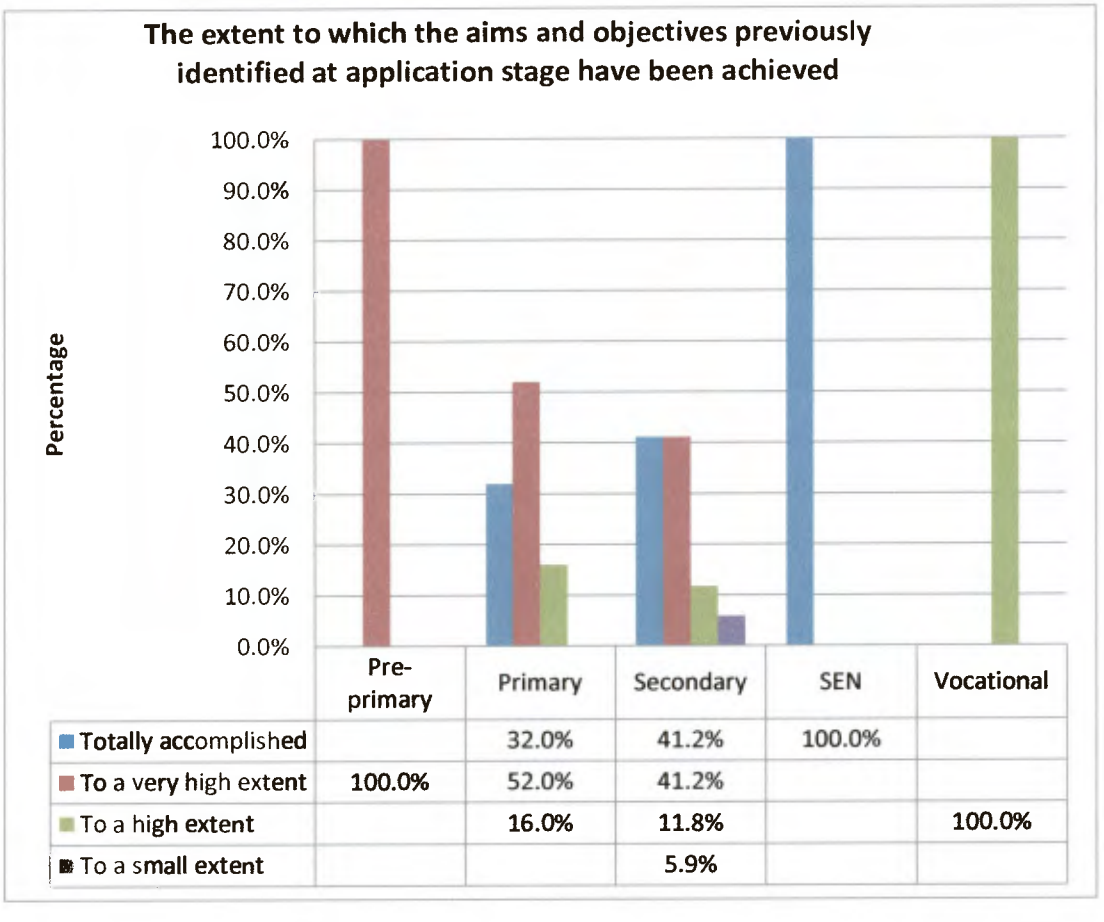


Chart Appendix 6.4: Showing a percentage breakdown of the level of achievement of the aims and objectives as assessed by the coordinators of the Comenius projects, based on a sample of 2010 final reports



	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	SEN	Vocational
Totally accomplished		32.0%	41.2%	100.0%	
To a very high extent	100.0%	52.0%	41.2%		
To a high extent		16.0%	11.8%		100.0%
To a small extent			5.9%		

Table Appendix 6.2: Showing a Pearson correlation for the degree to which the aims and objectives have been achieved and the phase of institution

		Degree to which aims and objectives have been achieved	Phase of institution
Degree to which aims and objectives have been achieved	Pearson correlation	1	.215
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.142
	N	48	48
Phase of institution	Pearson correlation	.215	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.142	
	N	48	48

To ascertain the strength of any relationship between the approach to monitoring and evaluation and the level of achievement, correlations were calculated as shown below. The small correlation coefficients indicate that the relationships are weak.

Table Appendix 6.3. Showing a correlation for the outputs and outcomes accomplished in the sample of Comenius reports and the method of monitoring and evaluation used in the projects

Correlations			
		M&E approach	Results/products/ outcomes accomplished
M&E approach	Pearson correlation	1	.192
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.192
	N	48	48
Results/products/outcomes accomplished	Pearson correlation	.192	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.192	
	N	48	48

Table Appendix 6.4: Showing a Pearson correlation for the aims and objectives accomplished in the sample of Comenius reports and the method of monitoring and evaluation used in the projects

Correlations			
		M&E approach	Aims and objectives accomplished
M&E approach	Pearson correlation	1	-.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.205
	N	48	48
Aims and objectives accomplished	Pearson correlation	-.186	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.205	
	N	48	48

Appendix 7: Showing the Sections from the Comenius institutions' final reports that are used in the qualitative analysis

Table Appendix 7-1: Showing the quantity and location of Comenius data used in the qualitative analysis

Comenius question reference	Comenius question	Quantity of data (A4 pages)
E3	European Value Added	106
E7	**Workplan**	46
E8	Communication and cooperation	64
E10 1b	What were the main conclusions and consequences of the monitoring and evaluation?	3
E10 2b	To what extent were results/products/outcomes previously identified at application stage achieved - how did they differ?	1
E10 3b	In case of underachievement, please explain ...	0.5
F3.1	Impact on learners	60
F3.2	Staff comments	55
F3.3	Impact on home institution	45
F3.4	Community comment	45
F3.5	other impact	20
G1	Problems/Obstacles encountered. Selected from a dropdown list - text is the specification for 'other'	58
G2	Comments and Suggestions, under 'Lessons Learned'	29
	TOTAL	521.5

Appendix 8: Evaluation of the impact of the programme based on the project coordinators' self-assessments

This appendix seeks to identify the extent to which the Comenius school partnerships demonstrate areas of impact that align with those identified in the literature review for successful international school partnerships. It includes the analysis of the strings of variables, of the extended text from Sections E and F3, and of the comments relating to impact from other sections in the final reports. The quantitative and qualitative outcomes are used to evaluate the partnerships' impact against the OTS.

8.1 Quantitative analysis of the strings of variables

Strings of variables were created by the authors of the final reports when rating, on a five part scale, a wide variety of predetermined indicators of impact. These strings were separated into their constituent parts and basic statistical information was computed for each. As discussed in Chapter 5, the indicators were summed for each area of impact and the statistics that describe the different areas, which form the teeth of cogs in the OTS, are shown in the table below:

Table Appendix 8-1: The distribution of the sum of the indicators by the areas of impact

		Sum of impact on learners	Sum of impact on staff	Sum of impact on home institution	Sum of impact on community
Number of cases	Valid	483	483	483	483
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Number of indicators		7	7	6	5
Mean		24.37	23.26	15.45	10.33
Standard Deviation		4.339	4.170	4.298	4.383
Mean score per indicator		3.48	3.32	2.58	2.07
Skewness		-.299	-.071	.129	.232
Kurtosis		1.003	.351	.146	.134
Range of scores		30	25	27	25

The table above shows that the arithmetic mean for the sum of the indicators for the impact on learners is broadly similar, given the standard deviation, to that for the impact on staff. This suggests that those completing the final reports considered that the impact of their project on learners and staff to be comparable, as demonstrated by the similar mean score per indicator figures. The least impact was seen in the wider community. The range of scores is slightly larger for the impact on learners than for the other areas. Similarly, the measures of kurtosis, which shows the peaks in the data, and, to a smaller extent, skewness, which describes the symmetrical distribution of the data, are larger for the impact on learners. Investigation as to why these differences have occurred revealed that a small number of schools focused the project not on individual pupils, but on the longer term benefit for all. The project coordinators allocated values to specific areas of the impact on learners that were well below the majority of the other scores. These 'outliers[81]' were carefully checked for errors, but found to be correct. They are salient descriptors that provide a richness in terms of the variability of the settings of different projects, and therefore I decided to retain them in their current form. Appendix 16 explores this in greater detail.

The following table shows the four indicators of impact broken down by their constituent parts. Both the mean and the median are shown. The former enables distinctions to be more finely drawn between the different components, while the median indicates which of the ranking scores formed the middle value and therefore provides a clear indicator of the areas of greatest and least impact. For pupils and staff the greatest impact of the partnerships, highlighted in green, was reported to be an increase in the knowledge about the partnership country and an increased awareness of cultural aspects. This is shown by the high mean score and the median. In the institution, the greatest impact, highlighted in yellow, was seen in the increased cooperation among the staff. In the local community, the partnership was reported to have the greatest impact on families and friends of those involved in the project. The lowest area of impact was seen with local companies, followed by changes to language teaching policy, as highlighted in brown overleaf. When the means in the next table are ranked, the impact of the partnerships on changing the curriculum is 13th out of 21. This would seem to indicate that the partnerships are not perceived by the coordinators to be change agents for the curriculum. This point will be followed up further in a later section in this appendix.

[81] Values that are well above or below the others.

Table 8-2: A summary of the analysis of the constituent parts of the strings of variables from Section F3

Comenius predetermined categories of impact, focusing on:	Number of cases		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing			
F3.1: Pupils - increased language skills	462	21	3.14	3	0.96
F3.1: Pupils - increased ICT skills	475	8	3.48	4	0.966
F3.1: Pupils - increased social skills	477	6	4.1	4	0.764
F3.1: Pupils - increased motivation	481	2	4.24	4	0.657
F3.1:Pupils - increased self-confidence	481	2	4.09	4	0.776
F3.1: Pupils - increased knowledge of partner countries and awareness of cultural differences	483	0	4.45	5	0.659
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased language skills	464	19	2.98	3	0.986
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased ICT skills	477	6	3.33	3	0.974
F3.2: Teachers and staff increased - pedagogical skills	478	5	3.62	4	0.867
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased motivation	483	0	4.20	4	0.755
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased project management skills	479	4	4.06	4	0.846
F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased knowledge about partners' countries and cultures	483	0	4.44	5	0.636
F3.3: Institution - changes to the curriculum/training programme	466	17	3.23	3	1.047
F3.3: Institution - changes to organisational management	449	34	2.84	3	1.001
F3.3: Institution - increased support of the organisation management	443	40	3.19	3	1.010
F3.3: Institution - changes in language teaching policy	425	58	2.53	2	1.159
F3.3: Institution: increased cooperation among staff	482	1	3.92	4	0.788
F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of family members	472	11	3.52	4	0.973
F3.4: Local community - increased cooperation with other local organisations	423	60	2.93	3	1.038
F3.4: Local community - increased cooperation with local companies	371	112	2.36	2	1.111
F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of other local actors	378	105	2.68	3	1.104

In order to develop indicators of impact in line with those specified in the evaluation schedule, the scores of the constituent indicators in each of the four areas of impact were summed and placed in order of magnitude. The number of reports that reached the ordered levels of impact (as determined by the actual sum of the rating scores

awarded as a percentage of the possible total), were calculated and shown as percentages in the following table:

Table 8-3: Percentages of reports reaching each level in the four areas of impact

Total of rating scores as a percentage of total score available		Percentage of reports with total ratings that equal to or exceed the percentage score shown in Column A			
Level of impact	**Column A**	Impact on learners	Impact on staff	Impact on institution	Impact on local community
Low	**30%**	99.6%	100.0%	94.6%	81.4%
	40%	98.6%	97.9%	81.8%	56.1%
Low - Medium	**50%**	96.7%	95.7%	59.8%	39.5%
Medium - High	**60%**	83.4%	74.9%	29.6%	15.1%
	70%	57.1%	48.2%	12.2%	7.0%
High	**80%**	22.6%	14.9%	3.7%	3.1%

The indicators of impact were then assessed using the evaluation schedule, which shows that:

- The impact of the partnerships on learners was excellent, as demonstrated by the fact that 83.4% of the reports gave this area of impact at least 60% of the available rating marks, as highlighted in green above
- The impact on staff was good, as seen by the fact that 74.9% of the reports gave this area of impact at least 60% of the available rating scores, as highlighted above in yellow
- The impact of the partnerships on the institutions and on the local communities was reported as poor, as shown by the figures highlighted in brown. Only 29.6% of the reports rated the impact on the institution with 60% of the available rating scores, and similarly only 15.1% of the reports awarded 60% of available marks to the impact on the local community.

8.2 Analysis of the extended responses

The qualitative analysis seeks to develop greater understanding of the findings from the analysis of the strings of variables. This section comprises three parts:

- An evaluation of emerging themes
- Analysis of responses that are coded in order to identify the frequency with which they arise

- A summary of the qualitative analysis.

8.2.1 Emerging themes

The analysis of the extended responses has provided over 135 emerging themes from Sections E and F. Appendices 10 to 14 shows the themes from each of the respective sections[82]. The emerging themes have been divided into two categories, one for positive and the other for negative themes. The negative emerging themes have been incorporated into Chapter 16 as part of the feedback on the programme. Responses for two questions relating to impact were coded using their emerging themes in order to enable the size of the response per theme to be evaluated. These questions were:

- F3.3: that focused on the impact of the partnership on the institution. This question directly relates to the research question that focuses on the extent to which the Comenius programme has an impact on the delivery of the curriculum.
- F3.5: that asked about other areas of impact that may not necessarily have been identified previously. The coding from this question provides an indication of the strength of the emerging themes and picks up any additional areas of impact that the report would otherwise not capture. .

Not all of the emerging themes from Section F3 relate to impact, as defined at the beginning of the report in Chapter 2. Some refer more clearly to outcomes. Impact is longer term and does not necessarily become apparent until after the project has been completed, whereas outcomes are directly attributable to the project. For example, the theme that says 'Comenius helped teachers to plan and deliver cross-curricular activities' is, in the strictest sense, an outcome, although the author of the report has considered it should be included in the section on impact. Since the emerging themes arise from the practitioners' assessments of the impact that the partnerships have had on key stakeholders, no distinction was made between outcome and impact in this section of the analysis. Where emerging themes from Section E relate to impact these have also been included.

The themes were grouped according to their subject matter. The cogs and teeth of the OTS provided a starting point for the framework for the classification. The standard was

[82] Appendix 10 provides the emerging themes for Section E3 and E8, Appendix 11 for E7 and E10, Appendix 12 for F3, Appendix 13 for the coded analysis of Section F3.3 and Appendix 14 for the coded analysis for Section F3.5.

neither restrictive nor impeded the development of a new structure. It was found that all 138 emerging themes could be placed in groups and all the groups of emerging themes were closely aligned with the cogs of the OTS. Each theme was allocated to all the groups to which it belonged. In some cases, the language of the teeth of the cogs tends to be related to process rather than impact, such as the statement for the third tooth in Cog 2 that refers to 'embedding global learning into the curriculum'. Despite the variance between process and impact, it is feasible to map the emerging themes onto the cogs and their teeth, because the alignment does not require an exact match between the words, but rather a close similarity in the content. For example, six emerging themes could be grouped under this third tooth of Cog 2. These include:

- Awareness of global ecological problems
- Multi-disciplinary approach to learning (not just languages, but involving music, science etc. too).

The results of the mapping exercise have been summed for each cog, and are shown in third column in the table below. Since the cogs have either three or six teeth, the mean number of emerging theme matches per tooth has been calculated and the cogs ranked accordingly as shown in the final column.

Table Appendix 8-4: Showing the numbers of emerging themes that relate to the impact of the Comenius partnerships that have been mapped onto the cogs of the operationalized theoretical standard

Cogs	Teeth of the cogs	Frequency of emerging themes mapped onto the operationalized theoretical standard	No. of teeth per cog	Mean (per tooth) matches with the emerging themes from Sections E & F	Cogs of the operationalized theoretical standard ranked by the mean (per tooth) matches with the emerging themes from Sections E & F
1:Partnership formation (processes to negotiate the relationship)	incorporating mutuality, reciprocity & respect exchange visits resolving power differences sharing a vision resolving issues willingness to develop understanding	**48**	**6**	**8**	**5th**
2. Objectives for school partnerships	ensuring jointly that the link is sustainable jointly developing global learning across the school	**61**	**6**	**10.2**	**3rd**

	embedding global learning into the curriculum				
	enhancing the curriculum through cross-curricular links				
	embedding partnership links into a wide range of subjects/topics				
	developing well-designed opportunities to address specific issues				
3. Leadership and management	active senior leadership team support				
	joint development of action plan, with a shared set of values				
	strong leadership of partnership, that self-evaluates, and is participatory and reflective	**50**	**6**	**8.3**	**4th**
	strong staff support				
	student participation at all levels				
	transparency of decision-making and mutual accountability				
4. Support and training	external support for the partnership, including involvement of the wider community				
	funding for the partnership	**56**	**3**	**18.7**	**1st**
	professional development: acquisition of knowledge and development of awareness: support for reflection and learning				
5. Communication	planning for and developing effective communication skills; self-awareness, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, openness, flexibility	**38**	**3**	**12.7**	**2nd**
	incorporating perspectives from partnership country				
	student-to-student communication				
6. Monitoring and evaluation	formal joint monitoring and evaluation of the processes				
	assessing the educational impact	**4**	**3**	**1.3**	**6th**
	evaluating the cost-effectiveness				

It can be seen from the above table that the area of impact with the highest number of matches of emerging themes per tooth is Cog 4, which incorporates teacher professional development. The data shows that interpersonal skills and multi-cultural awareness, Cog 5, are the second greatest area of impact from the international school partnerships. The table also shows that Cog 2 attracts the greatest number of emerging themes. This cog encompasses the enrichment of the curriculum within the institutions. This finding appears to disagree with the quantitative analysis, where the partnerships were not seen to have a major role in promoting changes to the curriculum[83]. The divergence between the quantitative and the qualitative analysis was

[83] Table 13.4 above shows that the mean rating score for F3.3 'changes to the curriculum/training programme' was 3.23, with a median score of 3 (out of 5), which suggests that the project coordinators did not consider that the partnerships had a large impact on changing the curriculum.

resolved by reviewing the original F3.3 text in detail. As mentioned earlier, it became clear that the partnerships did, in fact, have an impact on the curriculum, for example by enhancing its relevance for the learners, by affording opportunities for cross-curricular work and by providing enrichment activities, but they did not significantly alter the curriculum. One school explained that 'little changes in the curriculum were undertaken as this topic was already in our planning' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09487-1), while another stated that 'As a 14-19 school, the Comenius project work fitted around the curriculum due to coursework and exam commitments.' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-08875-1). The co-ordinators frequently indicated that the Comenius partnership was not viewed as a change agent for the curriculum, but was intended to link to the existing curriculum with minimum disruption.

The responses provide a rich array of details about the way in which the partnerships have enhanced the curriculum. For example:

'*We have now adopted a more creative curriculum approach as a result*'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09160-1)

'*The project helped to enhance the global dimension of the curriculum*'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09275-1)

'The impact on the curriculum - linking in sustainable development was very significant'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-14713-1)

'*Language became much more of a focus in the curriculum*'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-11456-1)

'The project has had a very significant impact on the ESDGC[84] curriculum'.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09313-1)

There are exceptions where the Comenius project has had a major impact on the curriculum:

'*During the course of the project, we re-wrote our whole school curriculum. Developing the international dimension became an important part of the new curriculum as we see this as integral to what we do in school and not an 'add on'.*

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09029-1)

[84] ESDGC refers to Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship which is a Welsh Assembly Government initiative: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/europeanandinternational/sustainabledevelop/?lang=en

'The school has recently made GCSE MFL compulsory for 80% of the cohort and it has recognised the need to promote the global dimension across all curriculum areas'.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09287-1)

One school, as a consequence of their Comenius partnership, has developed a curriculum that incorporates the European and Global Dimension. In its report, it highlights the outstanding impact that the partnership has had and it offers the view of the whole partnership:

'Teaching does not stop at the classroom door. The most effective teachers teach by example. Therefore, if we try to teach our pupils to be responsible citizens, we need to give the example by being involved in something ourselves. If we want to teach them to treat others with respect, we too must demonstrate this. They will see us out in the community (especially in smaller communities) and our actions there will speak much louder than our preaching in school.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09185-1)

A large number of responses indicate that the partnerships enable high quality professional development for staff, as illustrated by the following:

'The partnership project was one of the most motivating forms of professional development that school staff have been involved in for a number of years. They learned so much from the opportunities to observe good practice and pedagogy in other countries'.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09313-1)

'The experience was highly motivational for all staff concerned and had a real impact on pedagogy and practice'.

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09263-1)

One school in particular considered the impact on staff to be very high:

'The organisational demands of the project were very high. Our staff met these demands and learned a great deal in the process. In addition, the opportunity to observe and cooperate with teachers from other countries

has had a very high impact on our own professional development in learning and teaching'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09263-1)

8.2.2 Text coded using an emerging coding frame

The responses to two questions were coded in order to identify the frequency with which the themes were identified. The first question, F3.3, was selected as it relates directly to the research question that focuses on the extent to which Comenius work demonstrates an impact on delivery of curriculum goals. These curriculum goals may be determined by the schools, or by an external agent, such as their departments of education. The analysis builds on the findings described above and provides further understanding of the frequency with which coordinators identify the impact on the curriculum. The second question, F3.5, relates to other areas of impact that have not previously been identified. The coding from this question is used to triangulate the findings from the quantitative analysis of the string variables and the emerging theme analysis. The emerging themes for both of these questions were incorporated in the analysis above.

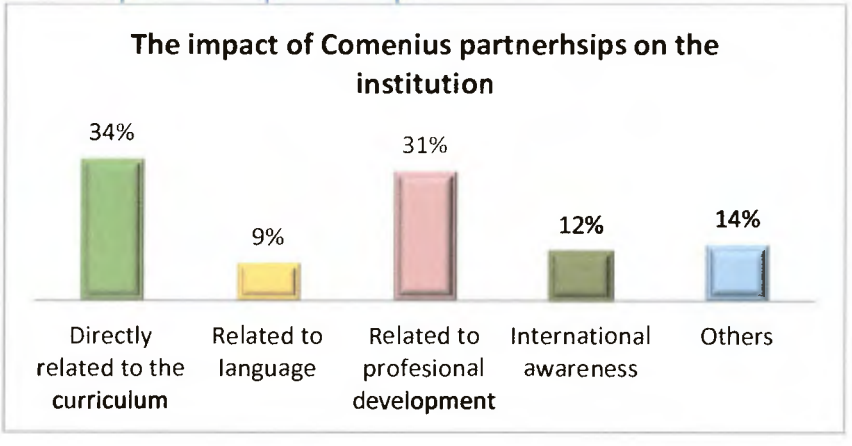
Question F3.3 was coded for all 483 reports using an emerging coded frame that provided 15 main themes, 14 of which were positive, one was negative and one incorporated the not applicable responses. The majority of responses were coded to a single theme, although some contributed to two. There was a large amount of text, which exceeded 45 A4 pages. Appendix 13 provides greater detail. Reviewing the coded responses enabled a number of the positive themes to be grouped together as there was some overlap and, on occasion, no distinct boundary between them. The themes and the groupings are shown in the next table.

Table Appendix 8-5: Showing the grouping of the individual themes arising from question F3.3 that focuses on the impact of the partnership on the school

Description	Group	Frequency	Frequency %
Allowed teachers to explore certain aspects of the curriculum in greater depth	Related directly to the curriculum	225	**34.2%**
Opportunities to forge cross-curriculum links between subjects			
New themes were incorporated into the curriculum (e.g. European Citizenship)			
Some schools added new foreign language programmes			
Schools moved more towards sustainable development / understanding of green issues			
Enhanced extracurricular activities			
Increase of teachers' & students' skills (ICT, language etc.)			
Some schools have relatively inflexible curricula or are legally bound to certain aspects of curriculum prohibiting large scale changes (6/658 = 0.9%)			
Encourages students to become more interested in MFL	Language related	60	**9.1%**
Language learning has become tied to cultural understanding			
Great cooperation / new opportunities for cooperation between staff members / management etc.	Related to professional development	**206**	**31.3%**
Shared knowledge & best practices between partner schools at a nation and international level			
Greater European 'feel' to the school / greater links across Europe	International awareness	78	11.9%
Increased impact on schools' relationships with parents, families & wider community	Others	28	4.3%
Good involvement of students		24	3.6%
Not Applicable		37	5.6%
Total		658	100.0%

The previous table can be shown in the form of a chart, as below:

Chart 8-1: Showing the grouping of themes arising from the responses to the question of the impact of the partnership on the UK institution



It can be seen that the main area of impact arising from the coded analysis relates directly to the curriculum, which accords with the analysis of the emerging themes as shown in Table 13-4, where Cog 2 attracts the greatest number of themes. Over 34% of the responses cite the curriculum as a key area of impact within the institutions. A large majority of the other responses relate to the curriculum in a broader sense, such as those mentioning the international dimension within the school, and the increase in cooperation between staff that enables cross-curricular links to be made. This shows the overlap between the groups. Although the areas relating to the curriculum and to language are very closely related, they have been separated in the chart in order to distinguish actual changes to the curriculum from changes in learning languages that arise from increased motivation and understanding. International awareness, although it can be subsumed into the curriculum category, refers to wider changes within the school ethos and thus is shown separately. A number of themes that have been attributed to the curriculum group also relate to teachers' professional learning, for example increased ICT skills. The coded analysis provides an indication of the strength of responses.

In the curriculum group, six schools identified that either the curriculum was not sufficiently flexible to encompass or there were legal requirements that restricted any major changes. For example, one school said that 'It is difficult to change the curriculum delivery *[as]* there is limited flexibility within the science and language curriculum' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09584-1). Once again this finding substantiates the view arising from the emerging themes that the partnership does not change the curriculum, but enhances it. The partnerships offer new opportunities for cross-curricular links.

Other important areas of impact, as identified by the project coordinators, are the forging of new working relationships across the staff, and the international dimension that the partnership has imparted to the school. For example, one school states that 'the greatest impact has been on the level of distributed leadership within the school' (Case:2008-1-BE3-COM06-00033-4), while another says there have been 'changes in ethos to more [*a*] outward looking organisation with greater awareness of cultural diversity' (Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP06-09215-1).

Many responses indicate the extent to which the partnership has had an impact on the curriculum, not by changing it, but by enhancing it:

> *'Although our language teaching policy is well established, involvement in the project encouraged all staff to incorporate some teaching of the partner languages'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-08926-1)*

> *'The curriculum is changing to a more creative topic based approach and the Comenius project was a perfect example of what can be achieved cross 'curricularly''*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09334-1)*

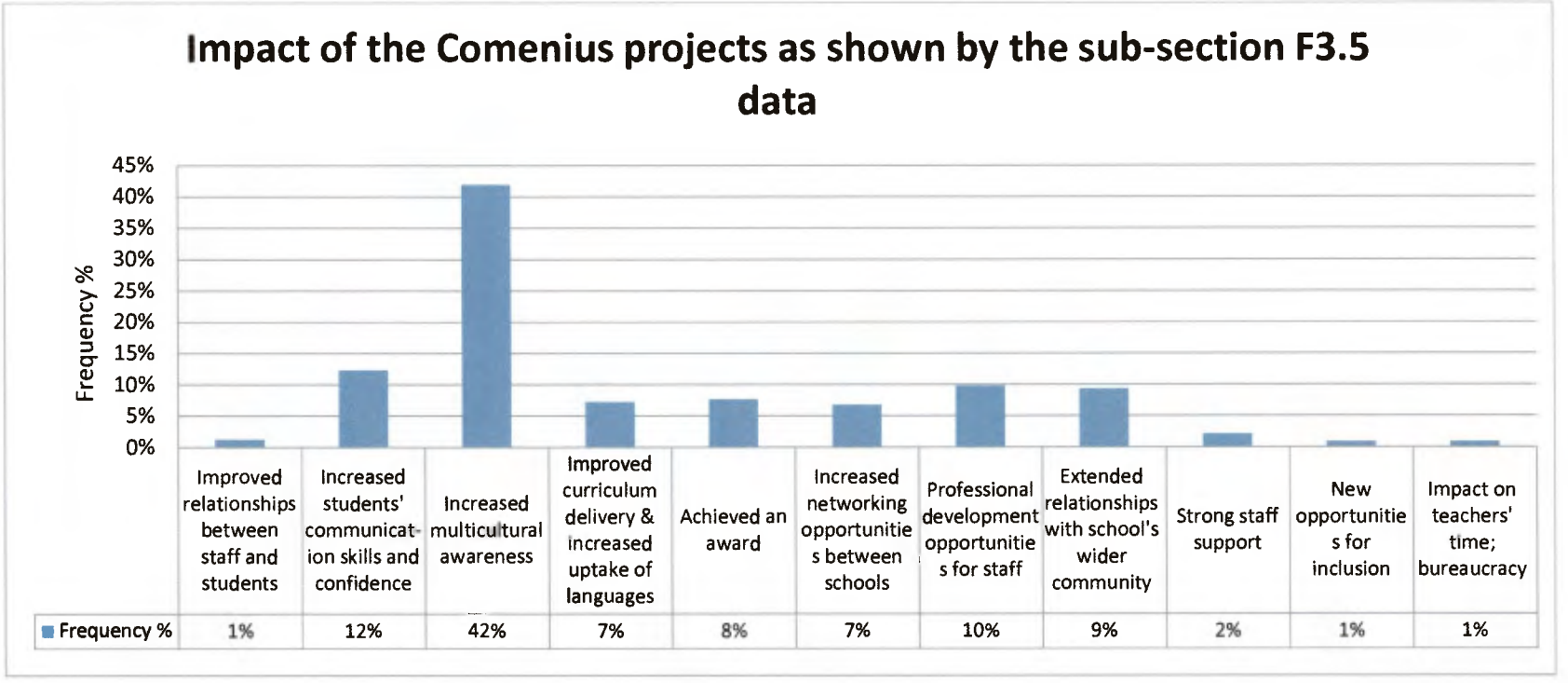
> *'The project has enabled staff from faculties and disciplines who do not normally work together to collaborate for an exciting purpose'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09334-1)*

> *'The project was part of a whole school drive to improve understanding of other cultures and countries and improve understanding for children of global issues.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-0914-1).*

The quantity and the quality of evidence provided in the final reports indicate the breadth of impact that the partnerships have on the schools. There is clear evidence to show that the programme not only enhances the school curriculum, but also provides very good professional development opportunities.

The text in the second question to be coded, F3.5, gave rise to 26 emerging themes that were used to code the data. These themes were grouped into ten positives ones and one that related to the impact that the project had on the teachers' time. The latter was incorporated into Chapter 16 that considers the lessons learned. Question F3.5 invites comments about other areas of impact not captured by the earlier questions in F3. The analysis of the coded data indicates that the most important area of impact is the increased awareness of multicultural issues. This finding broadly aligns with the earlier quantitative analysis, which indicates that the authors of the final reports consider that the partnership has the greatest impact on' raising pupils' awareness of other countries and cultures. As shown in the following chart approaching half of the 236 responses indicated that this was an important area of impact.

Chart Appendix 8-2: Showing areas of impact identified in Section F3.5 [85]



[85] Further details of the analysis can be found in Appendix 14..

Chart Appendix 8-2 overleaf also indicates that the project led to:

- An improvement in student communication skills and increased student confidence
- New professional development opportunities for staff
- Greater community involvement
- Achievement of a school award
- Enhanced curriculum opportunities
- Increased networking opportunities for schools.

The coded F3.5 data provides a rich variety of responses which substantiate in different ways the impact that the partnership has had on developing a global awareness in the school. A selection that endorses this area of impact is shown below:

> *'Being part of a Comenius project has really developed the awareness of intercultural understanding throughout the school.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09149-1)*

> *'A marked increase in enthusiasm amongst both staff and pupils to develop links with other countries around the world.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-COM06-00423-1)*

> *'The project has encouraged greater international awareness and understanding throughout the school community.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-13727-1)*

> *'Increased motivation to learn about other countries and become global citizens.'*
>
> *(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09208-1)*

Two schools that include a comment from their Ofsted reports help to triangulate further the evaluation of impact, as the following shows:

> *'OFSTED also visited us during our project and were extremely keen to find out the impact of our learning on our pupils. The observation of an*

'International' lesson deemed it 'outstanding' and the inspectors were very impressed with the project as a whole (an added bonus!!).'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-14720-1)

'Ofsted also commented on the impact of this work in school - 'Pupils make excellent contributions to the school, local neighbourhood and national and overseas communities through the schools' outstanding community cohesion' and 'plenty of international links enhance pupils' understanding of different cultures across the United Kingdom, Europe and the world beyond.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09030-1)

One report states that as a result of the work with the Comenius partners:

'The school has further committed to recognising its place in the global community and its commitment to the international dimension.'

(Case:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09193-1)

While another indicates that:

'The project has promoted distributed leadership within the school as less experienced teaching staff, who participated in the project, are now keen to lead future teaching and learning developments. It has enhanced their professional learning and their career aspirations'

(Case: 2008-1-SE1-COM06-00219-6)

8.2.3 Summary of the qualitative analysis

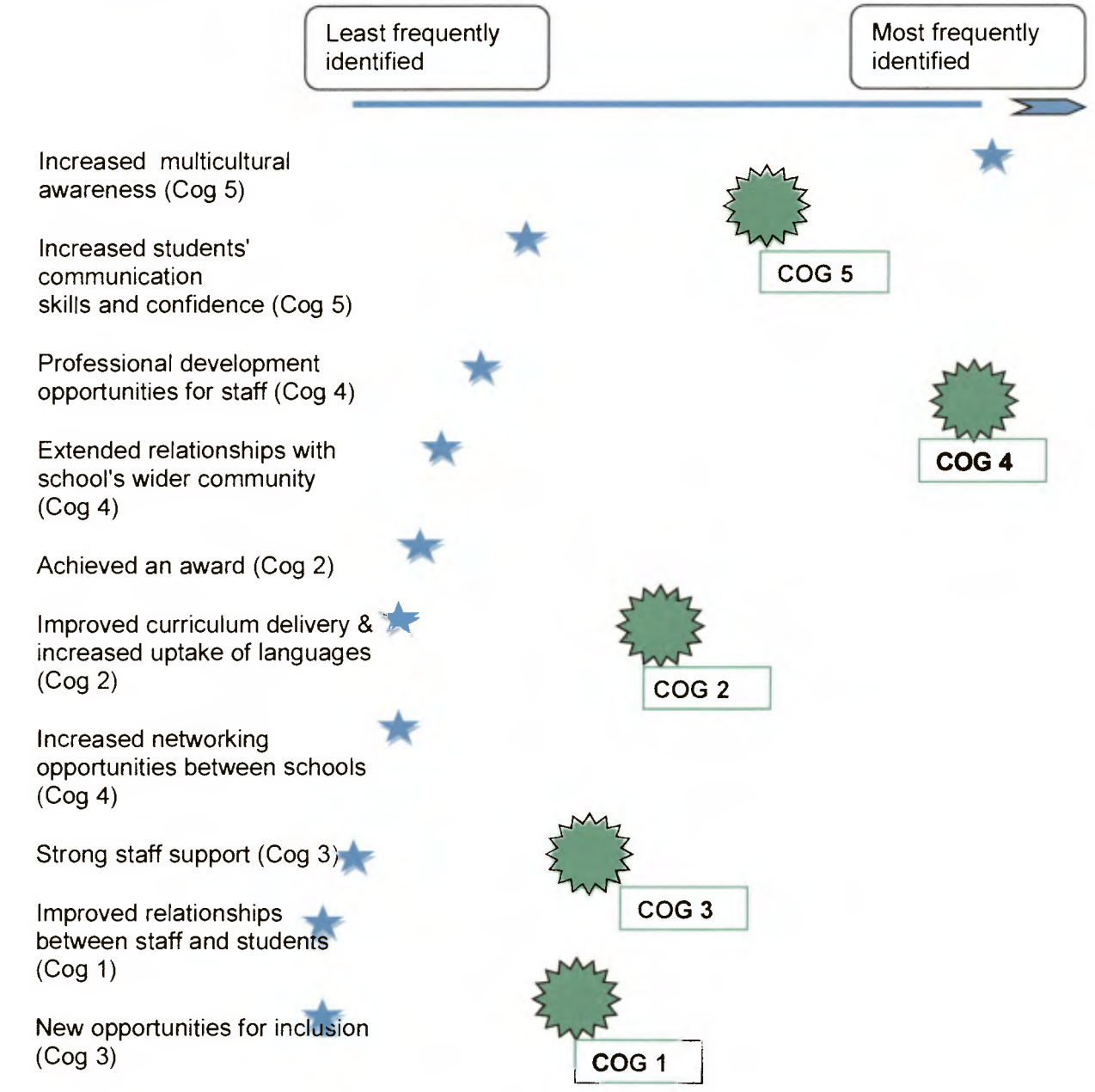
There are two aspects of the qualitative analysis. The first evaluates the impact that the partnerships have on the delivery of the curriculum. The second aspect analyses the data to establish the main areas of impact of the Comenius school partnerships overall and consider how closely they align with the OTS.

The analysis of the data focusing on the impact that partnerships have had on the UK institutions, shows that the main area of impact is the curriculum. This is demonstrated by over a third of the responses detailing the ways in which the partnership has directly enhanced the curriculum. The majority of the other responses relate to the curriculum in a broader sense. The range and breadth of detail provides much clear evidence to indicate that the programme can be assessed, using the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17 as having an impact on the delivery of the curriculum by enhancing it. In some schools the impact is exceptional.

The second aspect of the qualitative analysis is summarised in the following Figure 13-1 that incorporates the ranked areas of impact from Chart 13-2 and the data from Table 13-4. Figure 13-1 shows the match between the cogs of the OTS and the content analysis. The analysis of the emerging themes in Appendix 8 Subsection 8.2.1 shows a close alignment between the areas of impact identified in the responses provided by the coordinators of the projects and the OTS. The coded analysis of the question F3.5 in Appendix 8 Subsection 8.2.2 has been used to triangulate the outcomes from the mapping of the emerging themes onto the OTS. Overall it can be seen that the two analyses mirror each other well.

Figure 13-1 indicates that there is a close match between the emerging themes and the components of the OTS. The subcomponents have not been individually identified for the sake of clarity. The only cog that is not matched is Cog 6 that encompasses monitoring and evaluation of the project. This cog is more process orientated than impact related.

Figure Appendix 8-1: Showing the frequencies with which a variety of areas of impact were identified in the final reports using qualitative data analysis.
The cogs of the operationalized theoretical standard are shown in brackets.



8.3 Overall summary of the impact of the Comenius programme based on the project coordinators' self-assessments

In order to provide an overview of the impact of the partnerships, using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the outcomes from the sections above have been incorporated into a table, an extract of which is shown below. The full table can be seen in Appendix 18. The areas of impact identified in the qualitative coded and quantitative analyses have been ranked according to their frequency. The emerging themes have been used to place the cogs of the OTS in order of importance, as indicated by the responses in the Comenius final reports.

An overview of the rankings has been developed using a point system for the categories and their constituents, where points have been allocated to correspond to the position in the rankings. In the first two rankings the components are not bound together in their categories, but are separated. The category with the lowest average score indicates the most frequently identified area of impact. This relates to 'learners', and is shaded in pink. The green shaded area is the second category and covers 'staff professional development'. The cream shaded areas relate to the curriculum and denote the third area of impact. It can be seen that overall the three methods of analysis have broadly similar outcomes. This triangulated approach endorses the methodology used.

Table Appendix 8-6: A comparison of outcomes from the different methods of assessing the impact of Comenius school partnerships, based on the coordinators' self-assessment (Extract from Appendix 18)

F3 5 coded data analysis		Quantitative analysis using strings of variables		Mapping of emerging themes onto the operationalized theoretical standard		
Data coded to the following emerging themes	**Ranked in order of frequency**	**Comenius predetermined categories of impact, focusing on:**	**Ranked in order of mean rating scores**	**Cogs**	**Teeth of the cogs**	**Cogs of the operationalized theoretical standard ranked by the mean (per tooth) matches with the emerging themes from Sections E & F**
Increased multicultural awareness	1	F3.1: Pupils - increased knowledge of partner countries and awareness of cultural differences	1	4. Support and training	external support for the partnership, including involvement of the wider community	1
Increased students' communication skills and confidence	2	F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased knowledge about partners' countries and cultures	2		funding for the partnership	
Professional development opportunities for staff	3	F3.1: Pupils - increased motivation	3		professional development: acquisition of knowledge and development of awareness: support for reflection and learning	
Extended relationships with school's wider community	4	F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased motivation	4	5. Communication	planning for and developing effective communication skills; self-awareness, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, openness, flexibility	2

Achieved an award	5		F3.1: Pupils - increased social skills	5		5. Continued	incorporating perspectives from partnership country	
Improved curriculum delivery & increased uptake of languages	6		F3.1:Pupils - increased self-confidence	6			student-to-student communication	
Increased networking opportunities between schools	7		F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased project management skills	7		2. Objectives for school partnerships	ensuring jointly that the link is sustainable	
Strong staff support	8		F3.3: Institution: increased cooperation among staff	8			jointly developing global learning across the school	
Improved relationships between staff and students	9		F3.2: Teachers and staff increased - pedagogical skills	9			embedding global learning into the curriculum	
New opportunities for inclusion	10		F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of family members	10			enhancing the curriculum through cross-curricular links	3
Impact on teachers' time; bureaucracy	11		F3.1: Pupils - increased ICT skills	11			embedding partnership links into a wide range of subjects/topics	
			F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased ICT skills	12			developing well-designed opportunities to address specific issues	

			F3.3: Institution - changes to the curriculum/training programme	13		3. Leadership and management	active senior leadership team support	4
			F3.3: Institution - increased support of the organisation management	14			joint development of action plan, with a shared set of values	

In the previous table, it can be seen that the coded analysis of F3.5 themes and the quantitative analysis show broadly similar rankings for the first three areas of impact. These are learners, staff and the curriculum. This is not dissimilar to the emerging theme analysis based on the OTS in the final columns. Overall, the alignment between the programme's areas of impact and the OTS is a close one. Using the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17 a close alignment indicates a good level of success for a school partnership programme when viewed against the international school partnership landscape. The strength of the triangulated evidence supports the conclusion that, on the basis of impact as assessed by the UK institution, the Comenius programme is successful in promoting effective school partnerships.

Appendix 9: To what extent do Comenius partnerships demonstrate success?

This appendix brings together the outcomes from the analysis of the Comenius programme and evaluates them against the OTS. It falls into four sections, some of which have been described in detail previously:

- A comparison of the Comenius programme's criteria for successful partnerships with the OTS based on the literature review
- The extent to which UK Comenius coordinators' evaluations of their projects demonstrate success when viewed against the OTS
- The extent to which the Comenius programme demonstrates an impact on the delivery of curriculum
- Overall assessment of the Comenius programme's outcomes.

9.1 A comparison of the Comenius programme's criteria for successful partnerships in terms of impact and the OTS based on the literature review

As described in Subsection 5.4.2.4, three readers undertook the mapping exercise. The following table shows the results. It can be seen that all three readers agreed on 30% of the Comenius programme's indicators that could be mapped onto the OTS. Two thirds of the readers agreed on a further 44% of the indicators matching closely with the cogs and teeth of the OTS. Overall, at least two out of the three readers agreed on 20 out of the 27 Comenius programme's indicators (i.e.74%) that could be aligned with the OTS.

Table Appendix 9-7: Showing the levels of agreement in the task of mapping the Comenius indicators onto the operationalized theoretical standard

Cogs	Teeth of the cogs	Level of agreement
1:Partnership formation (processes to negotiate the relationship)	incorporating mutuality, reciprocity and respect	
	exchange visits	
	resolving power differences	
	sharing a vision	
	resolving issues	
	willingness to develop understanding	

2. Objectives for school partnerships	**ensuring jointly that the link is sustainable**	
	jointly developing global learning across the school	
	embedding global learning into the curriculum	
	enhancing the curriculum through cross-curricular links	
	embedding partnership links into a wide range of subjects/topics	
	developing well-designed opportunities to address specific issues	
3. Leadership and management	**active senior leadership team support**	
	joint **development of action plan, with a shared set of values**	
	strong leadership of partnership, that self-evaluates, and is participatory and reflective	
	strong staff support	
	student participation at all levels	
	transparency of decision-making and mutual accountability	
4. Support and training	external **support for the partnership, including involvement of the wider community**	
	funding **for the partnership**	
	professional development: acquisition of knowledge and development of awareness: support for reflection and learning	
5. Communication	planning **for** and **developing effective communication skills; self-**awareness, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, openness, flexibility	
	incorporating perspectives from partnership country	
	student-to-student communication	
6. Monitoring and evaluation	**formal** joint monitoring and evaluation of the processes	
	assessing the educational impact	
	evaluating the cost-effectiveness	

Key	Level of agreement	Number of areas of agreement	% level of agreement
	A majority	12	**44%**
	Consensus	8	**30%**
	A majority agreement or **better**		74%

Using the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17, a 74% alignment between the Comenius programme indicators and the OTS is a close one and is judged to be **good.**

9.2 The extent to which UK Comenius coordinators' evaluations of their projects demonstrate success when viewed against the OTS

Since the alignment between the Comenius programme's indicators and the OTS (as shown overleaf) is close, it is reasonable to assume that there should be a close alignment between the project coordinators' evaluations and the OTS. The extent to which the programme demonstrates success is dependent upon the content of these evaluations.

This section combines the findings from the analysis described in Appendix 8 above:

- Evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the Comenius programme as shown in the final reports
- Evaluation of the impact of the Comenius programme as assessed by the project coordinators in their final reports.

The summaries only are included in this section.

9.2.1 Evaluation of outputs and outcomes from the Comenius programme

The summary of the analysis in Chapter 6 shows that the sample of Comenius reports, when assessed against the evaluation schedule, demonstrates:

- The level of achievement (77%) of outputs and outcomes of the projects as assessed by the coordinators against their original applications, is **good**
- The level of achievement (83%), of the aims and objectives of the projects as assessed by the coordinators against their original applications, is **good.**

9.2.2 Evaluation of the impact of the Comenius programme

The quantitative analysis in Appendix 8 indicates that the impact of the partnerships is greatest on the learners, and is least apparent in the local community.

Table Appendix 9-8: Showing the grade awarded to each of the key areas of impact, using the evaluation schedule (Appendix 17)

Learners	The impact **of the partnerships on learners** was **excellent**, as demonstrated by the fact that 83.4% of the reports gave this area of impact at least 60% of the available rating marks
Staff	The impact on staff was **good,** as seen by the fact that 74.9% of the reports gave this area of impact at least 60% of the available rating scores
Institutions and local communities	The impact of the partnerships on the institutions and on the local communities was reported as being **poor**. Only 29.7% of the reports rated the impact on the institution with 60% of the available rating scores, and similarly only 15.1% of the reports awarded 60% of available marks to the impact on the local community.

The qualitative evaluation of impact, based on the extended responses, in Appendix 8 Subsection 8.2 used two approaches. The first one identified emerging themes and the second coded themes from two questions to ascertain their frequency. The OTS provided the benchmark for the comparison of the findings. The outcomes show that, overall, there is a close alignment between the areas of impact, as identified by the authors of the final reports, and the OTS, which encompasses those areas of impact that have been identified in the literature review as being associated with successful international school partnerships. Using the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17, a close alignment indicates that the Comenius programme is **good** at promoting successful international school partnerships in terms of the impact on the UK institution.

The analysis of the data that focuses on the impact that the partnerships have had on the UK institutions provides much good evidence to indicate that, on basis of the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17, the programme's impact on the delivery of curriculum by enhancing it is appreciable.

9.3 Overall assessment of the Comenius programme's outcomes

Finally, as described in Subsection 5.2.1 to provide an over-arching view of the programme, all the indicators of the programme are assessed against the evaluation schedule in Appendix 17. A 'best-fit' view is taken. Further detail is shown in Appendix 19.

The programme has two excellent aspects:

- Impact on learners

- Alignment of the language used in the reports with that identified in the literature review as being associated with successful international school partnerships.

Seven aspects are deemed to be good:

- Impact on staff
- Quality of the reports
- Indicators of outcome and impact for the programme align closely with those identified in the literature review as being associated with successful international school partnerships
- Qualitative analysis of impact, using the UK coordinators' assessments, shows there is a close alignment with those areas of impact identified in the literature review as being associated with successful international school partnerships, as captured in the OTS
- Impact on the delivery of the curriculum by enhancing it
- Achievement of outputs and outcomes as identified in the application forms
- Achievement of aims and objectives as identified in the application forms.

There are two poor areas;

- the impact on the institution
- impact on the local community.

The analysis provides compelling evidence of the extent to which Comenius school partnerships are successful. Using the evaluation schedule, the programme is very good, and in some respects excellent, in delivering effective school partnerships. I believe the evidence clearly demonstrates that school partnerships can effectively deliver school improvement.

Appendix 10: Emerging themes from the Comenius data Section E3 'European value added', broken down by school phase, and Section E8 'Communication and cooperation'

The content analysis of the final reports' Section E3, which requests information about the value that the partnership has added towards an improvement in European cooperation, has identified the following themes:

Schools for pupils with special educational needs
Improved sense of self-expression (through learning simple phrases in other languages, through arts & crafts and non-linguistic communication)
Improved self esteem
Expansion of horizons
Increased autonomy
Gives relevancy to subjects that are being taught (i.e. sustainability, geography etc.)
Knowledge sharing between schools at an international level
Staff have improved knowledge of differing educational systems
Distance of communication meant the acquisition of new ICT skills
Primary school
Fostering greater levels of independence in students
Increasing awareness of other cultures
Enabling students from poor economic background to travel to places they would not otherwise go
Giving value to foreign language learning and bilingualism
Sharing good practise and new approaches to pedagogy at an international level
Distance of communication meant the acquisition of new ICT skills
Greater awareness of the broader community
Secondary school
Practical application of language skills
Exchange of teaching experience across schools at an international level / Learning about alternative approaches to pedagogy
Encouragement of cultural diversity and tolerance
Exploration of global issues in a meaningful context (i.e. the environment)
Multi-disciplinary approach to learning (not just languages, but involving music, science etc. too)
Opportunity for pupils from deprived areas to travel to places they wouldn't otherwise go
Providing future motivation to work / study abroad

Promotion of equality between races, genders, religions and cultures
Involvement stretched beyond the schools to include parents, local media and the wider community
Distance of communication meant the acquisition of new ICT skills

The question in Section E8 asks the school to describe the cooperation and communication between the participating organisations involved in the partnership, and particularly whether they were all equally involved. Using content analysis the following emerging themes were identified:

Positives
Achievable goals and deadlines set by participants
Clear guidelines and protocols
Clearly delegated tasks
Democratic communication (although English is the dominant language, all partners are equal)
Effective involvement of external agencies (MEPs, local groups etc.)
Efficient planning meetings
Engagement with planning process by all parties (staff and students)
Enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate
Exploration of cultural differences at both a staff level and a pupil level
Frequent, multi-modal communication (email, postal mail, Skype, forums, websites etc.)
Good use of non-verbal communication during mobilities (art installations, body language, costumes, dance, music etc.)
New ICT tools used effectively
New perspectives and discussion from all partners
Openness and transparency of communication
Production of high quality pedagogical materials
Pupil and staff mobility
Sharing ideas across schools for best practice
Use of ICT by staff and pupils
Negatives
Differing approaches to the same goal
Differing school calendars and timetables
Differing school finances
Difficulties with E-Twinning platform
External circumstances disrupting mobilities (volcanic ash cloud, swine-flu outbreak etc.)

Mid-project staff turnover
Occasional language barriers (re: Bulgaria & Turkey)
Occasionally infrequent / inconsistent communications
Technical failures of ICT (email, Skype, low-bandwidth)
Time constraints preventing implementation of certain ideas.

Appendix 11: Emerging themes from the Comenius data Sections E7 'Workplan and tasks' and Section E10 'Evaluation'

Question E7 asks the institutions to identify the tasks actually carried out that were different from those planned at the application stage and to explain why there were differences. Content analysis identified the following emerging themes:

Positives
In general the activities were carried out as planned
Stated aims of the project were met
Initial plans were able to expand beyond the original remit to include new ideas.
Positive outcomes were sometimes unanticipated (e.g. exchange of new practises and attitudes between countries).
Additional visits were made to facilitate extra planning
Negatives
ICT issues interfered with work-plan (e.g. E-twinning platform did not work as expected, video conferencing banned in Turkish schools)
Some schools not accepted for partnership, necessitating changes to the workflow
Lack of funding necessitated changes to the workflow
Staff turnover
Volcanic eruption in Iceland changed the workflow

Question E10 assesses the extent to which monitoring and evaluation were undertaken and the degree to which the outputs and outcomes were achieved. Content analysis was used to identify the following emerging themes:

E10b Themes from the responses to the question that asked what the main conclusions and consequences were of the monitoring and evaluation
1. Things were smoother when host meetings were organized in advance
2. When students were involved directly with the project, it was more relevant and interesting
3. Monitoring and evaluation were important to the smooth running of the project
E10 2b Themes from the responses to the question that asked to what extent the results/products/outcomes previously identified at application stage were achieved and how they differed

1. Goals differed mainly due to ICT implementations
2. Outcomes were mainly as expected
E10 3b Themes from the responses to the question that asked which aims/objectives were not achieved and for what reasons
1. Issues with funding halted some goals
2. Issues with ICT halted some goals

Appendix 12: Tables showing the emerging themes from the Comenius data Section F3 'Impacts'

Content analysis was used to identify the emerging themes from the Section F3 which focuses on the impact of the partnerships from the UK institutions' perspectives.

Table Appendix 12-1: Showing the emerging themes from Section F3.1 'Impact of the partnership on the pupils/learners/trainees'

Positive
Improved social/communication skills and confidence
Increasing interest in language learning
Awareness of global ecological problems
Improved empathy and awareness of diversity
Awareness of the accessibility of Europe
Increased team working skills
Greater knowledge of other cultures
Challenging of stereotypes, gender bias, racism
Students experienced high levels of enjoyment from the activities.
Greater opportunities for self-expression through art, dance, music etc.
Negative
Only a slight increase in IT skills seemed to be reported by most schools
Language skills did not increase as much as they could have done due to most partners speaking English

Table Appendix 12-2: Showing the emerging themes from Section F3.2 'Impact of the partnership on the teachers/staff'

Positive
Increase in knowledge of new cultures
Increase in pedagogical skills
Opportunities to explore new educational environments
Staff were highly motivated, enthusiastic and committed to the project
Staff willing to learn new languages and skills
Staff had opportunities to learn new ICT skills
Good experience of project management and leadership
Staff cooperated well, both inside their schools and across schools / borders
Pupil motivation and behaviour has improved as a result of the project
Comenius helped teachers plan and deliver cross-curricular activities

Staff enjoyed meeting and building friendships on an international level
Inclusive of students with SEN
Building a greater sense of European citizenship
Negative
High staff turnover during project
Language limitations (mitigated somewhat by the main language for the project being English)

Table Appendix 12-3 Showing the emerging themes from Section F3.3 'Impact of the partnership on the organisation'

Positives
Allowed teachers to explore certain aspects of the curriculum in greater depth
Language learning has become tied to cultural understanding
New themes were incorporated into the curriculum (e.g. European Citizenship)
Opportunities to forge cross-curriculum links between subjects
Great cooperation between staff members
Enhanced extra-curricular activities
Greater European 'feel' to the school
Schools moved more towards sustainable development / understanding of green issues
Some schools added new foreign language programmes
Encourages younger students to become more interested in MFL
Shared knowledge & best practices between partner schools at a nation and international level
Increased impact on schools' relationships with parents, families & wider community
Increase of teachers' & students' skills (ICT, language etc.)
Good involvement of students
Negatives
Some schools have relatively inflexible curricula or are legally bound to certain aspects of curriculum prohibiting large scale changes

Table Appendix 12-4: Showing the emerging themes from Section F3.4 'Impact of the partnership on the local community' broken down by school type

Schools for pupils with special educational needs
Positive
Positive engagement of families of those who attend mobilities
Focus on sustainable development has led to cooperation with local organisations
Local media provided positive press coverage
Good working partnerships with local businesses and organisations (i.e. Police, Garden centres etc.).
Comenius has created the opportunity to build links with other schools in the area

Negative
Some companies don't see the benefit in being involved with smaller schools
The wider catchment area of some SEN schools makes local community impact harder to achieve
Pre-Primary schools
Positive
Parents and families took a positive role and interest in their children's education
Good local press
Performances led by children have reached wide audiences in the local community
Children have been involved with the local authority in recycling and reusing materials
Local councillors and the Mayor have been involved in backing the project
Primary schools
Positive
Support came from local companies, charities, the National Trust etc.
Generally families were keen to get involved and the project increased contact between schools and parents
Schools have become more aware of the need for sustainability and recycling in the wider community
The project has created links between other local primary and secondary schools
Negative
Some schools are in geographically isolated / rural areas making involvement with the wider community very difficult
Secondary schools
Positive
Help and support from local businesses, organisations and charities
Local media provided positive press coverage.
Speakers and representatives from local organisations came to the school to give talks/help etc.
External agencies provided data and information for various projects
Strong involvement by parents and families
Various Mayors and council officials have offered support for the project
The project has provided a way to challenge racism and prejudice in the wider community
Negative
The need for CRB checks as well as socio-economic factors sometimes stopped families from being totally involved in the project
Larger schools seemed to have less involvement with local community (possibly as they are more self-sufficient)
Some schools reported little impact beyond the families of participating students

Other educational institutions involved in Comenius
Positive
Help and support from local businesses, organisations and charities
Parents and families got involved with the project
Various online campaigns had an effective audience in the local region and beyond

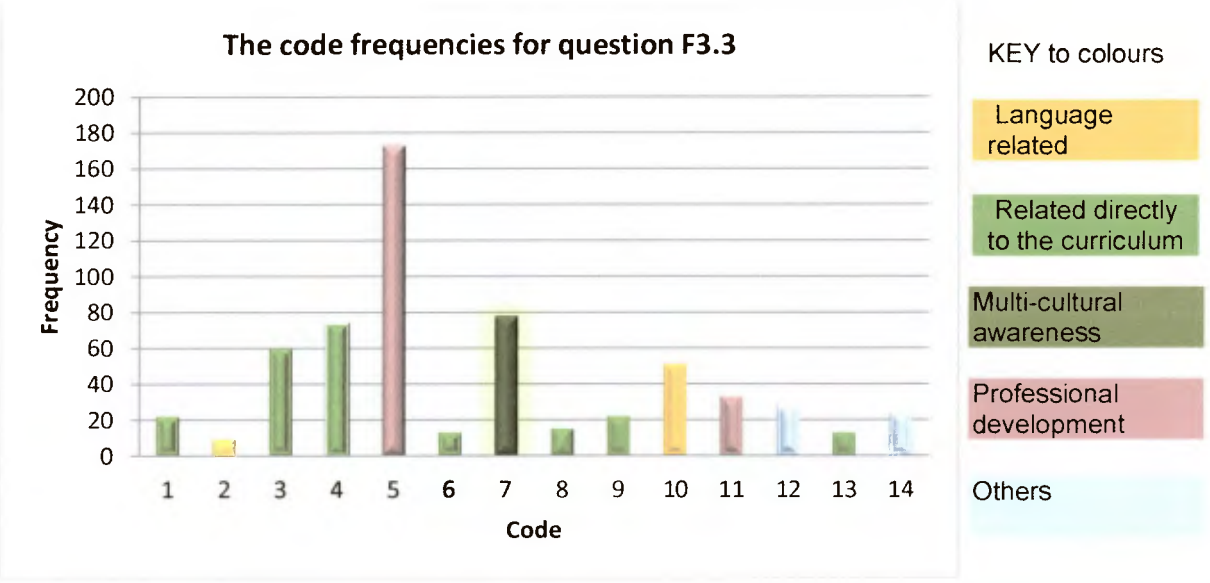
Appendix 13: Tables showing coded analysis from the extended responses in Sections F3.3 that focuses on the impact of partnerships on the UK institutions

The responses to the question F3.3 were coded using emerging themes. The themes and the frequencies are shown in the tables below. The codes are numbered in order of appearance.

Table Appendix 13-1: Showing the emerging coding for Section F3.3 'Impact on home institution'

Description	Frequency	Frequency %
Positive		
001 Allowed teachers to explore certain aspects of the curriculum in greater depth	22	3.3%
002 Language learning has become tied to cultural understanding	9	1.4%
003 New themes were incorporated into the curriculum (e.g. European Citizenship)	60	9.1%
004 Opportunities to forge cross-curriculum links between subjects	74	11.2%
005 Great cooperation / new opportunities for cooperation between staff members / management etc.	173	26.3%
006 Enhanced extra-curricular activities	13	2.0%
007 Greater European 'feel' to the school / greater links across Europe	78	11.9%
008 Schools moved more towards sustainable development / understanding of green issues	15	2.3%
009 Some schools added new foreign language programmes	22	3.3%
010 Encourages students to become more interested in MFL	51	7.8%
011 Shared knowledge & best practices between partner schools at a nation and international level	33	5.0%
012 Increased impact on schools' relationships with parents, families & wider community	28	4.3%
013 Increase of teachers' & students' skills (ICT, language etc.)	13	2.0%
014 Good involvement of students	24	3.6%
Negative		
101 Some schools have relatively inflexible curricula or are legally bound to certain aspects of curriculum prohibiting large scale changes	6	0.9%
999 Not Applicable	37	5.6%

Chart Appendix 13.1: Showing the frequency of the themes arising from the responses to the question of the impact of the partnership on the UK institution



KEY for F3.3 codes	
Code	**Description**
1	Allowed teachers to explore certain aspects of the curriculum in greater depth
2	Language learning has become tied to cultural understanding
3	New themes were incorporated into the curriculum (e.g. European Citizenship)
4	Opportunities to forge cross-curriculum links between subjects
5	Great cooperation / new opportunities for cooperation between staff members / management etc.
6	Enhanced extra-curricular activities
7	Greater European 'feel' to the school / greater links across Europe
8	Schools moved more towards sustainable development / understanding of green issues
9	Some schools added new foreign language programmes
10	Encourages students to become more interested in MFL
11	Shared knowledge & best practices between partner schools at a nation and international level
12	Increased impact on schools' relationships with parents, families & wider community
13	Increase of teachers' & students' skills (ICT, language etc.)
14	Good involvement of students

It can be seen, prior to any grouping the themes, that the main area of impact arising from the responses to this question has been the forging of new working relationships across the staff. Overall the impact on the curriculum includes both the green and orange sections. These have been separated in order to distinguish any changes

related to the learning of language as a result of the partnerships. Number 7 can be viewed as being related to the curriculum, but it may also be part of a wider change within the school.

Appendix 14: Tables showing coded analysis from the extended responses in Section F3.5 that captures other areas of impact

The responses to the question F3.5 was coded using emerging themes. The themes and the frequencies are shown in the tables below. The codes are numbered in order of appearance.

Table Appendix 14-1: Showing the emerging coding for Section F3.5 'Other' impacts

Description	Frequency
001 Clarification of the concept Student Voice	1
002 Increase of positive relationships amongst staff and students	2
003 Students learnt to communicate in a multi-lingual context	5
004 Development of a multicultural understanding throughout the school / greater awareness of other countries and cultures	50
005 The project has enabled the school to create new / multidisciplinary teaching resources and expand the curriculum	16
006 Students have achieved a greater confidence	18
007 School won an award as a result of participation in the project	18
008 Greater links to / cooperation with other British schools	9
009 Students now have broader horizons and new understand of the opportunities available to them	13
010 An increase in awareness of local and global environmental issues	12
011 Good opportunity to share educational practice across countries and increased motivation to do so	10
012 Large impact on students' families / Parents now more interested in internationalism	11
013 Increased motivation of students to learn about European countries, languages, cultures and issues	13
014 New connections to charities, businesses etc.	3
015 Increased uptake of second languages from countries associated with the project	1
016 Enhanced leadership skills amongst members of staff	2
017 Local community very keen to get involved with / back the project	9
018 Increase of staff confidence and aptitude	11
019 Some older students found employment abroad as a result of Comenius	1
020 Staff not directly involved with the project still showed their support	4
021 Students have stayed in touch with friends in other countries	5
022 The project has had a wide impact in the community beyond the immediate school context	1

023 New opportunities to support children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds	2
024 On-going relationships with other members of partnership	7
025 The project raised the profile of the school in the local community and beyond	9
026 Staff more willing to go the extra mile for colleagues	1
101 Impact on teachers due to lost time spent planning / dealing with bureaucracy	2
999 Not applicable	2
Total	238

The codes were then grouped into the following main categories. The final '999 not applicable' code was not included.

Table Appendix 14-2: Showing the main categories for Section F3.5 'Other' impacts

Description	Frequency %	Frequency
Improved relationships between staff and students	1%	3
Increased students' communication skills and confidence	12%	29
Increased multicultural awareness	42%	99
Improved curriculum delivery & increased uptake of languages	7%	17
Achieved an award	8%	18
Increased networking opportunities between schools	7%	16
Professional development opportunities for staff	10%	23
Extended relationships with school's wider community	9%	22
Strong staff support	2%	5
New opportunities for inclusion	1%	2
Impact on teachers' time; bureaucracy	1%	2
	100.0%	236

Appendix 15: Tables showing further details of the lessons learned from Section G in the Comenius reports.

Table Appendix 15-1: Showing the frequencies for the predetermined categories listed in the final report template for Section G1

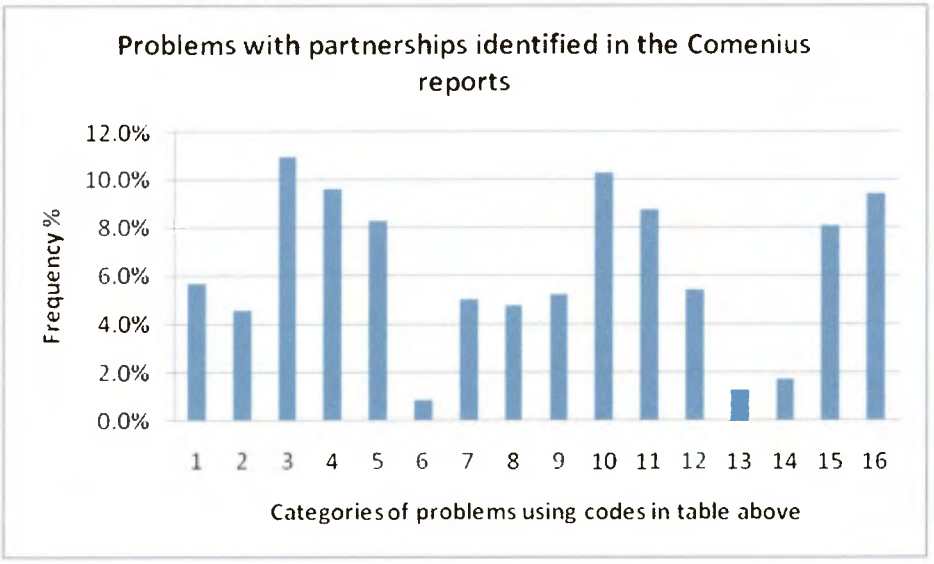
	Problems/difficulties in order of priority			Total
Category	first	second	third	
High administrative workload	43	35	3	81
Lack of time for the project	41	35	9	85
Communication problems	79	4	3	86
Lack of support within the participating organisations	3	4	0	7
Language problems	18	18	3	39
Late grant/contract payments	13	1	4	18
Organisational problems within the organisation	20	10	4	34
Organisational problems with partner organisations	10	10	12	32
Other	107	34	8	149
TOTAL	334	151	46	531

Table Appendix 15-2: Showing the categories that emerged from the analysis of the text in Section G1

Categories emerging from the textual responses in Section G1	Frequency %
1 No real difficulties	5.7%
2 Difficulties when partnerships are rearranged	4.6%
3 Staff turnover and staff sickness	10.9%
4 Time management	9.6%
5 ICT related difficulties	8.3%
6 Difficulties with travel	0.9%
7 Finding mutually acceptable dates for visits, as term dates differ	5.0%
8 Difficulties with child protection requirements	4.8%
9 Difficulties with funding and budgeting	5.2%
10 Unforeseen problems, e.g. volcanic ash	10.3%
11 Admin. problems, e.g. paperwork, report deadline	8.7%
12 Language barriers	5.5%
13 Problems keeping all staff and students motivated and engaged	1.3%
14 Difficulties completing some tasks due to school curriculum, school specialisms etc.	1.7%

15 Communication problems other than language, e.g. time zone differences, late e-mails, misunderstandings	8.1%
16 Problems with project management / high workload / unevenly shared workload	9.4%

Appendix 15.1: Showing the difficulties associated with Comenius partnerships as identified in Section G1



From the above it can be seen that the most common difficulties related to staffing problems and unforeseen difficulties, such as that caused by the volcanic ash problem in April 2010. The table below shows that the most frequent difficulties lay with the reporting procedures.

Table Appendix 15-3: Showing the emerging codes used to analyse the recommendations for improvement in the programme and in its delivery as identified in Section G2

Emerging codes	Number in each code	Percentage of population in each code
Difficulties with the reporting procedures	62	34.4%
Problems with both reporting and the Comenius administration	31	17.2%
Funding issues	27	15.0%
Administration difficulties	22	12.2%
Other combinations	8	4.4%
Time issues	7	3.9%
Problems with partnership	6	3.3%
ICT issues	6	3.3%
Commendations	6	3.3%
Problems with mobilities	3	1.7%

Inclusion issues	2	1.1%
TOTAL	180	100.0%

Appendix 16: Further quantitative analysis of the responses in Section F.3

Table Appendix 8-1, copied below, provides the measures of kurtosis, which shows the peaks in the data, and skewness, which describes the symmetrical distribution of the data. These measures are important in determining whether parametric statistical techniques can be applied to a set of data. Pallant (2007) indicates that, with reasonably large samples, skewness will not have a major impact on the analysis, and the risk that kurtosis will 'result in an underestimate of variance' (p. 56) is reduced. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p. 81) indicate in their book on multivariate analysis that a large sample is greater than 200 cases, which applies to the current study with nearly 500 reports. On this basis I have used parametric statistics.

Appendix Table 16.1: The distribution of the sum of the indicators by the areas of impact

		Sum of impact on learners	Sum of impact on staff	Sum of impact on home institution	Sum of impact on community
Number of cases	Valid	483	483	483	483
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Number of indicators		7	7	6	5
Mean		24.37	23.26	15.45	10.33
Standard Deviation		4.339	4.170	4.298	4.383
Mean score per indicator		3.48	3.32	2.58	2.07
Skewness		-.299	-.071	.129	.232
Kurtosis		1.003	.351	.146	.134
Range of scores		30	25	27	25

A normal distribution of the sums of the impact measures for the different groups (learners, staff, institution and community) is confirmed in the following four charts, where the observed value of the sums of impacts are plotted against the expected value from a normal distribution. Pallant (2007, p. 62) indicates that 'a reasonably straight line suggests a normal distribution'.

Charts showing the normal probability plots for the four areas of impact.

Chart Appendix 16.1: Showing the normal probability plots for the sum of the impact on learners

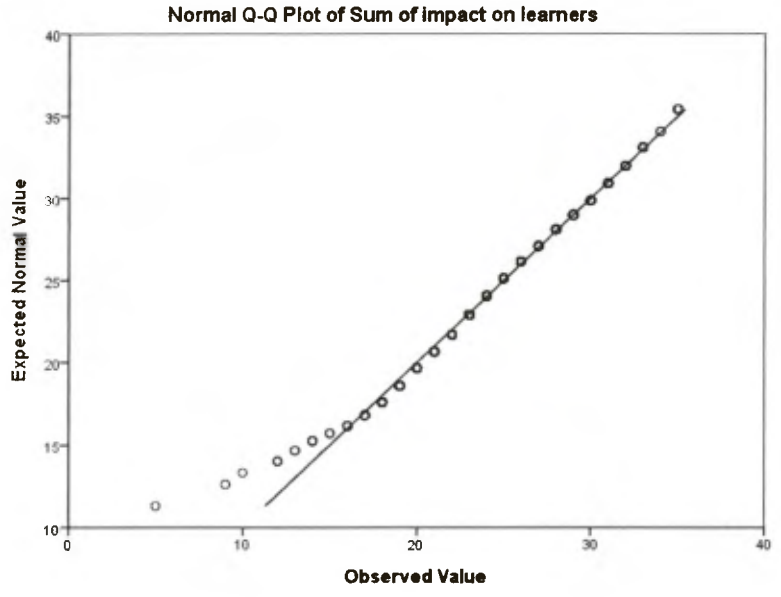


Chart Appendix 16.2: Showing the normal probability plots for the sum of the impact on staff

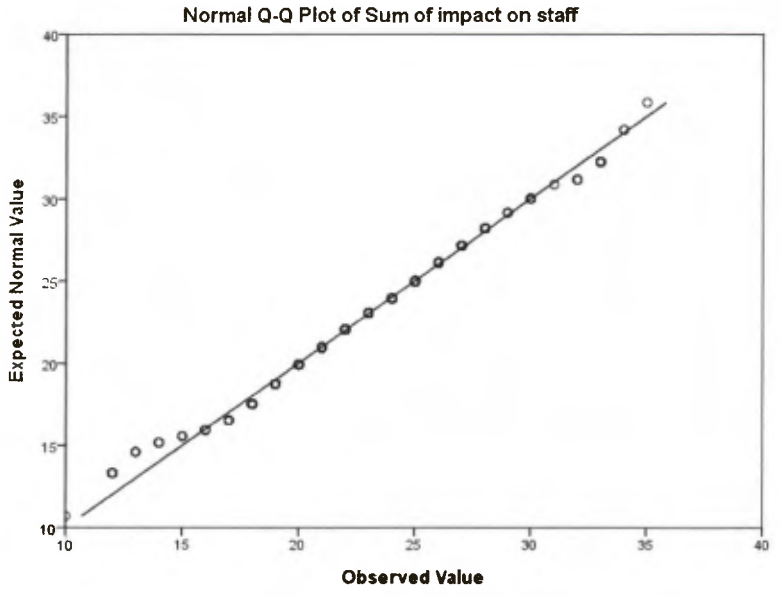


Chart Appendix 16.3: Showing the normal probability plots for the sum of the impact on the institution

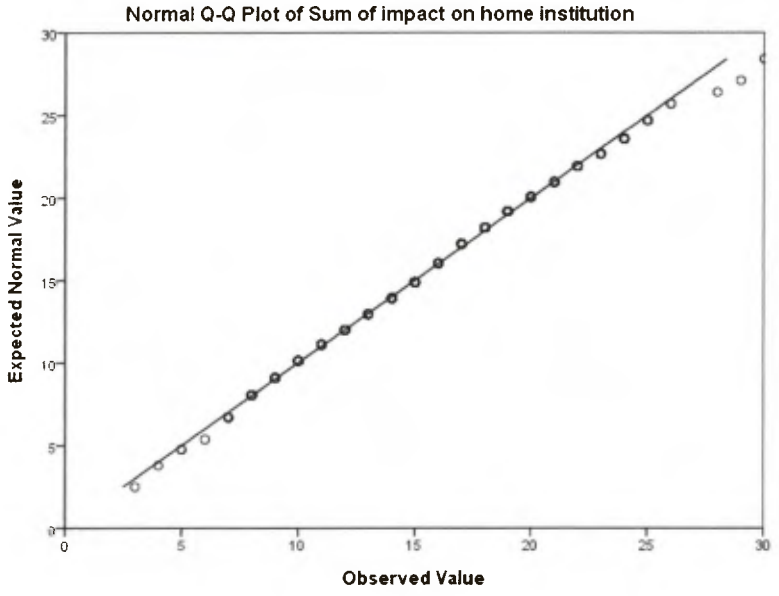
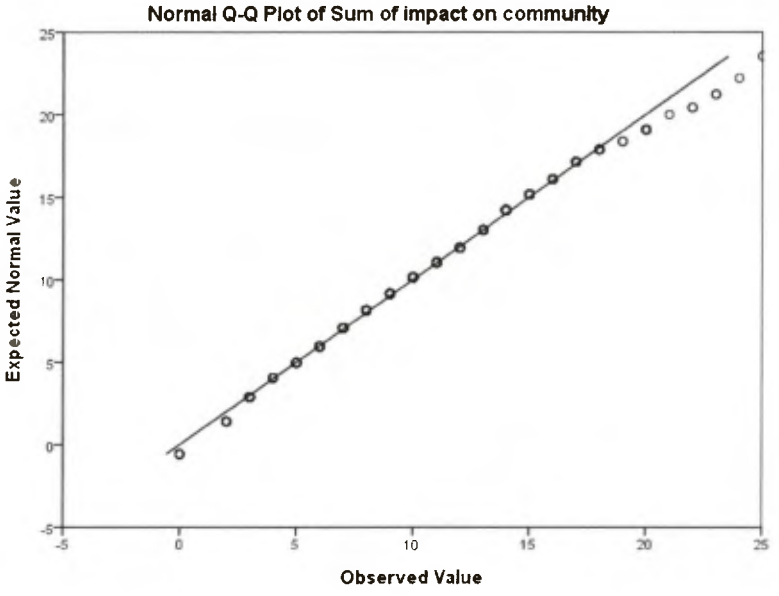


Chart Appendix 16.4: Showing the normal probability plots for the sum of the impact on the community

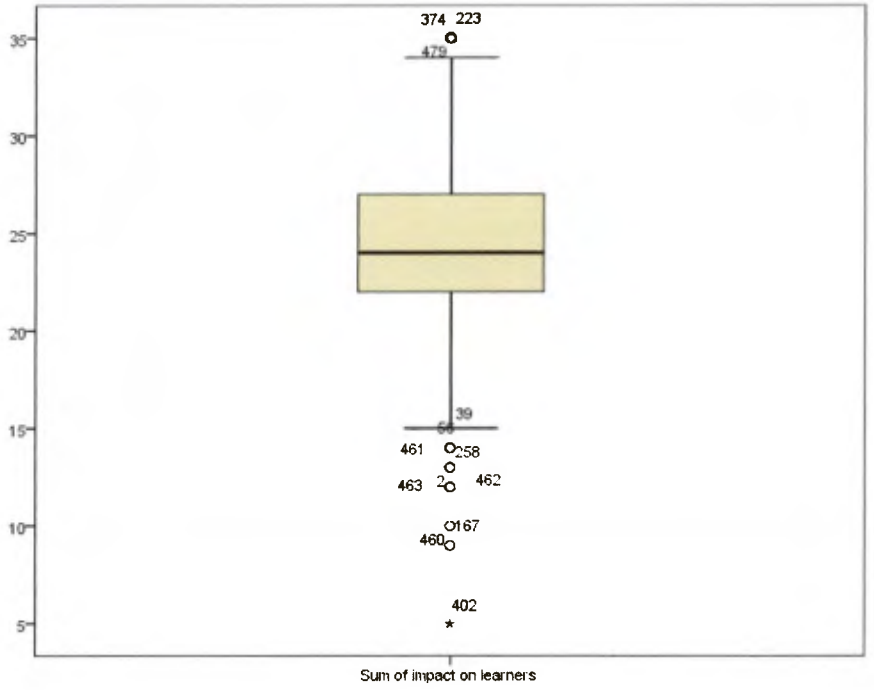


The normal probability plots (called Q-Q Plots in SPSS) show that in all cases the majority of cases are clustered along a straight line, which suggests a normal distribution.

An analysis of the data to identify whether some cases have values well above or below the majority of the other cases, which SPSS calls outliers, indicates that there are some that fall into this category. This is shown in the boxplot chart below, where

outliers are seen as circles with their case numbers adjoining. Outliers are cases that extend beyond 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of the box. The case with the asterisk (402) is more than 3 box-lengths from the edge of the box.

Chart Appendix 16.5: Showing a boxplot of the sum of the impact on learners to identify data with extreme values



In the above chart it can be seen that there are a number of outliers for the sum of the impact on learners with one extreme point. Firstly, the cases were checked, using their identification number, in order to determine whether there were errors in the data itself. It is important to consider whether to include these in the data analysis or, if an error is identified in the coding, to amend it. For example, case 402 is seen as extreme point at the bottom of the boxplot above. This case has a total score of only 5 for the seven indicators making up the sum of impact on learners, as shown in the following string of variables:

Pupil-LangNotAp0Pupil-ICTNotAp0Pupil-SocialNotAp0Pupil-MotivNotAp0Pupil-SelfSmall2Pupil-CultureNoImp1Pupil-OthSmall2
(Case: 402:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09422-1)

The text associated with the indicators in this case offers some insight as to why the sum of variables showing the impact on learners is so low:

'Through the project outcomes i.e. improving the learning environment, already pupils are benefiting at the Royal Blind School from ideas generated by the project as project members put them into practice and encourage colleagues to do likewise. It is anticipated that this will be an on-going and cumulative process especially in any new build of school facilities. Young learners at the school (4 in total) who took part in the questionnaire had a benefit from having their views included at an early central stage of the project. The proposal of the project was explained to all participating pupils before the questionnaire was undertaken and feedback was given.'

(Case:40:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09422-1)

It appears that the students, of which there were four, had major disabilities, and that the immediate impact of the project on them was limited, because, as seen in an earlier section of the report, the stated objectives for the project were not focused on individual students but on the longer term benefit for all. The author indicated that the objectives were the 'development of practical knowledge and awareness in the area of design of learning environments for school-aged learners which lead to improved and inclusive education for all' (Case:402:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09422-1). In deciding how to address the outliers, and in particular this extreme point, the whole case was examined in detail. For example, the depth to which the author of the 402 report had gone in other sections of the report, both in terms of rating variables and in extended text, would suggest that the indicators rated as zero, as seen in the above string of variables, were not overlooked and thereby automatically coded to zero, but were considered to be not applicable by the author, who therefore coded them as zero. Similarly, in case 39 the objectives of the partnerships were to implement:

'portfolio-based assessment [that] will actually help decrease the number of pupils who leave school early because this assessment technique tends to encourage students, as they are better able to see what they can do individually - as opposed to being shown their failures in summative assessment'.

(Case:39:2008-1-GB1-FRP05-09285-1)

A lower total of the impact indicators of the project on learners could be anticipated, since the aim was to develop a strategy to keep more students in school by developing a more student focused assessment system. Consequently, because these outliers are

salient descriptors that provide a richness in terms of variability of settings of the project, I decided to retain them in their current form.

This viewpoint was endorsed when I examined a comparison of the means and the 5% trimmed means of the four areas of impact as shown in table below. Since the means and the 5% trimmed means are fairly similar, I concluded that the outliers will not greatly affect the outcomes of the statistical analysis.

Appendix Table 16-2: Showing the effect of outliers on the four areas of impact

		Sum of impact on learners	Sum of impact on staff	Sum of impact on home institution	Sum of impact on community
Number of cases	Valid	483	483	483	483
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		24.37	23.26	15.45	10.33
5% Trimmed Mean		24.44	23.28	15.40	10.25

Appendix 17: The evaluation schedule for a school partnership programme

Utilising the operationalized theoretical standard of successful international school partnerships to evaluate the indicators and outcomes of the Comenius school partnerships.

This is intended to provide a 'best fit' outcome, where 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = fair and 4 = weak. It is not intended to provide a check-list.

Criteria for evaluation	Alignment with components of operationalized theoretical standard (shown as cog numbers)	Score
Over 80% of the reports are evaluated as meeting the required standard (rated green), with 25% or over exceeding the standard (rated gold). No reports fail to meet the standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align very closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 80% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
Qualitative analysis indicates that there is a very close alignment between the areas of impact, as identified by the project coordinators in the final reports, and the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns very closely with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by the fact that at least 80% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	1,3,4 & 5	

Qualitative analysis indicates that the international school partnerships have a major impact on the delivery of the curriculum goals.	1,3,4 & 5	
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	1
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on staff.	1, 3, 4 & 5	
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e.18 points or more out of a possible 30) for the impact of the partnership on the school.	2,3 4,5 & 6	
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. more than 15 points out of a possible 25) for the impact of the partnership on the local community.	4	
Over 80% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the results, products and outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Less than 1% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified results, products and outcomes.	6	
Over 80% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the aims and objectives and the outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Less than 1% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified the aims and objectives.	6	
Over 70% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold). No more than 25% of the final reports in any phase of school are judged to be weak (graded as red).	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 70% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
Qualitative analysis indicates that there is a close alignment between the areas of impact, as identified by the project coordinators in the final reports, and the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	

The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns closely with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by the fact that at least 70% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	1,3,4 & 5	**2**
Qualitative analysis indicates that the international school partnerships have a medium impact on the delivery of the curriculum goals.	1,3,4 & 5	
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on staff.	1, 3, 4 & 5	
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e.18 points or more out of a possible 30) for the impact of the partnership on the school.	2,3 4,5 & 6	
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. more than 15 points out of a possible 25) for the impact of the partnership on the local community.	4	
Over 70% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the results, products and outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Less than 2% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified results, products and outcomes.	6	
Over 70% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the aims and objectives and the outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Less than 2% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified the aims and objectives.	6	
Over 60% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold). No more than 25% of the final reports in any phase of school are judged to be weak (graded as red).	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 60% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	

Qualitative analysis indicates that there is alignment between the areas of impact, as identified by the project coordinators in the final reports, and the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	**3**
The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by the fact that at least 60% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	1,3,4 & 5	
Qualitative analysis indicates that the international school partnerships have a minor impact on the delivery of the curriculum goals.	1,3,4 & 5	
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on staff.	1, 3, 4 & 5	
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e.18 points or more out of a possible 30) for the impact of the partnership on the school.	2,3 4,5 & 6	
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. more than 15 points out of a possible 25) for the impact of the partnership on the local community.	4	
Over 60% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the results, products and outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Less than 3% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified results, products and outcomes.	6	
Over 60% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the aims and objectives and the outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Less than 3% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified the aims and objectives.	6	

Under 60% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold).	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact do not align closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by less than 60% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
Qualitative analysis indicates that the areas of impact, as identified by the project coordinators in the final reports, and the operationalized theoretical standard do not closely align.	1,2,3,4,5 & 6	
The language used in the final reports of the programme does not align closely with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is seen by the fact that under 60% of the 50 most frequently used words in the responses in the reports match the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.	1,3,4 & 5	**4**
Qualitative analysis indicates that the international school partnerships have a minimal impact on the delivery of the curriculum goals.	1,3,4 & 5	
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on learners.	1,3, & 5	
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. 21 points or more out of a possible 35) for the impact of the partnership on staff.	1, 3, 4 & 5	
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e.18 points or more out of a possible 30) for the impact of the partnership on the school.	2,3 4,5 & 6	
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of at least 60% of possible marks (i.e. more than 15 points out of a possible 25) for the impact of the partnership on the local community.	4	
Less than 60% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the results, products and outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. More than 3% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified results, products and outcomes.	6	

Less than 60% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the aims and objectives that were identified at the initial application stage. More than 3% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified the aims and objectives.	6	

Appendix 18: The complete table showing a comparison of the key areas of impact identified in the quantitative and qualitative analysis

F3.5 coded data analysis		Quantitative analysis using strings of variables		Mapping of emerging themes onto the operationalized theoretical standard		
Data coded to the following emerging themes	**Ranked in order of frequency**	**Comenius predetermined categories of impact, focusing on:**	**Ranked in order of mean rating scores**	**Cogs**	**Teeth of the cogs**	**Cogs of the operationalized theoretical standard ranked by the mean (per tooth) matches with the emerging themes from Sections E & F**
Increased multicultural awareness	1	F3.1: Pupils - increased knowledge of partner countries and awareness of cultural differences	1	4. Support and training	external support for the partnership, including involvement of the wider community	1
Increased students' communication skills and confidence	2	F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased knowledge about partners' countries and cultures	2		funding for the partnership	
Professional development opportunities for staff	3	F3.1: Pupils - increased motivation	3		professional development: acquisition of knowledge and development of awareness: support for reflection and learning	

Extended relationships with school's wider community	4		F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased motivation	4		5. Communication	planning for and developing effective communication skills; self-awareness, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, openness, flexibility	2
Achieved an award	5		F3.1: Pupils - increased social skills	5			incorporating perspectives from partnership country	
Improved curriculum delivery & increased uptake of languages	6		F3.1:Pupils - increased self-confidence	6			student-to-student communication	
Increased networking opportunities between schools	7		F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased project management skills	7		2. Objectives for school partnerships	ensuring jointly that the link is sustainable	3
Strong staff support	8		F3.3: Institution: increased cooperation among staff	8			jointly developing global learning across the school	
Improved relationships between staff and students	9		F3.2: Teachers and staff increased - pedagogical skills	9			embedding global learning into the curriculum	
New opportunities for inclusion	10		F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of family members	10			enhancing the curriculum through cross-curricular links	
Impact on teachers' time; bureaucracy	11		F3.1: Pupils - increased ICT skills	11			embedding partnership links into a wide range of subjects/topics	

			F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased ICT skills	12			developing well-designed opportunities to address specific issues	
			F3.3: Institution - changes to the curriculum/training programme	13		3. Leadership and management	active senior leadership team support	4
			F3.3: Institution - increased support of the organisation management	14			joint development of action plan, with a shared set of values	
			F3.1: Pupils - increased language skills	15			strong leadership of partnership, that self-evaluates, and is participatory and reflective	
			F3.2: Teachers and staff - increased language skills	16			strong staff support	
			F3.4: Local community - increased cooperation with other local organisations	17			student participation at all levels	
			F3.3: Institution - changes to organisational management	18			transparency of decision-making and mutual accountability	
			F3.4: Local community - increased support and participation of other local actors	19		1:Partnership formation (processes to negotiate the relationship)	incorporating mutuality, reciprocity & respect	5
			F3.3: Institution - changes in language teaching policy	20			exchange visits	
			F3.4: Local community - increased cooperation with local companies	21			resolving power differences	
							sharing a vision	

							resolving issues	
							willingness to develop understanding	
						6. Monitoring and evaluation	formal joint monitoring and evaluation of the processes	6
							assessing the educational impact	
							evaluating the cost-effectiveness	

Appendix 19: Overview of the indicators of impact (F3.1 – F3.4) in the Comenius reports and incorporating the quality grading of the final report

Indicators	Scores				Comenius programme
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Weak	
	1	2	3	4	
Over 80% of the reports are evaluated as meeting the required standard (rated green), with 25% or over exceeding the standard (rated gold). No reports fail to meet the standard.					
Over 70% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold). No more than 25% of the final reports in any phase of school are judged to be weak (graded as red).		86.5%			86.5% meet the required standard, and 25% are gold or better, but in the pre-primary phase of the 15 schools 4 (i.e. 27%) submitted reports that were weak. A 'best- fit' judgement has been made.
Over 60% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold). No more than 25% of the final reports in any phase of school are judged to be weak (graded as red).					
Under 60% of the reports are evaluated as meeting or exceeding the required standard (graded green or gold).					
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on learners.	83.40%				83.4% of reports rate the impact of their projects on learners to be medium or better, giving this aspect of the impact evaluation at least 60% of available marks.

Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on learners.					
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on learners.					
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on learners.					
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on staff.					
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on staff.		74.90%			74.9% of reports rate the impact of their projects on staff to be at the medium level or better, giving this aspect of the impact evaluation at least 60% of available marks.
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on staff.					
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on staff.					
Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the school.					
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the school.					
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the school.					
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the school.				29.65%	29.6% of reports rate the impact of their projects on the institution to be at a medium level or better, giving this aspect of the impact evaluation at least 60% of available marks.

Over 80% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the local community.					
Over 70% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the local community.					
Over 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the local community.					
Less than 60% of the reports give a summary rating of over 60% of possible marks for the impact of the partnership on the local community.				15.10%	15.10% of reports rate the impact of their projects on the local community to be at a medium level or better, giving this aspect of the impact evaluation at least 60% of available marks.

The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align very closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 80% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.					
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 70% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.		74%			74% of the Comenius programme's indicators of outcomes and longer-term impact match in some way with those of the operationalized theoretical standard.

The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact align with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by at least 60% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.					
The programme's indicators of outcomes and longer term impact do not align closely with the operationalized theoretical standard. This is shown by less than 60% of the programme's measurement indicators matching in some way those of the operationalized theoretical standard.					
Qualitative analysis indicates that there is XX alignment between the areas of impact, as identified by the project coordinators in the final reports, and the operationalized theoretical standard.	Very close alignment	Close alignment	Alignment	Do not align closely	Qualitative analysis indicates a close alignment using two approached to triangulate the outcome.
Qualitative analysis indicates that the international school partnerships have a XX impact on the delivery of the curriculum goals.	Major	Appreciable	Minor	Minimal	Qualitative analysis indicates that international school partnerships have an important impact on the curriculum in a wide variety of ways.
The language used in the final reports of the programme aligns very closely with that used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards. This is demonstrated by at least XX% of the 50 most	≥80%	≥ 70%	≥ 60%	≤ 60%	Approximately 82% of the 50 most frequentl

frequently used words in the responses in the reports matching the words used in the operationalized and the theoretical standards.					y used words in the Comeniu s response s from Section E3 and F3.1 to F3.4 match those in the operation alized and theoretic al standard s.
Where XX% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the results/products/outcomes that were identified at the initial application stage. Where YY% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified the results/products/outcomes.	Where XX ≥80% and YY ≤ 1%	Where XX ≥70% and YY ≤ 2%	Where XX ≥60% and YY ≤ 3%	Where XX ≤ 60% and YY ≥ 3%	Approxim ately 77% of the sample of Comeniu s reports indicated that all or nearly all of the aims and objective s and outcomes were met, and 2% indicated that these were achieved only to a small extent.
Where XX% of the projects were deemed to be successful in achieving, either totally or to a very high extent, the aims and objectives that were identified at the initial application stage. Where YY% of the projects only achieved to a small extent their previously identified the aims and objectives.	Where XX ≥80% and YY ≤ 1%	Where XX ≥70% and YY ≤ 2%	Where XX ≥60% and YY ≤ 3%	Where XX ≤ 760% and YY ≥ 3%	Approxim ately 83% of the sample of Comeniu s reports indicated that all or nearly all

					of the aims and objectives and outcomes were met, and 2% indicated that these were achieved only to a small extent.

Appendix 20: Ethics approval

Institute of Education, University of London
Ethics Approval for Doctoral Student Research Projects: Data Sheet

Please read the notes before completing the form

Project title	Can a universal model be constructed for a successful school partnership? Does theory match practice?		
Student Name	Angela Cook		
Supervisor	Charlie Owen		
Advisory committee members			
School/Unit	EdD	Faculty	FCP
Intended start date of data collection	01/09/2011		
Funder	Mott MacDonald		
Professional Ethics code used	Code of Practice for Official Statitstics January 2009: BERA: Data Protection Act		

Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?
If your research is based in another institution then you may be required to submit your research to that institution's ethics review process. If your research involves patients or staff recruited through the NHS then you will need to apply for ethics approval through an NHS Local Research Ethics Committee. In either of these cases, you don't need ethics approval from the Institute of Education. If you have gained ethics approval elsewhere, please detail it here:

No

Research participants
Does the research involve human participants?
☐ Yes, as a primary source of data *(e.g. through interviews)*
☐ Yes, as a secondary source of data (e.g. using existing data sets)
☐ No *Please explain* ____

If the research involves human participants, who are they? (tick all that apply)
☐ Early years/pre-school
☐ School-aged children
☐ Young people aged 17-18
☒ Unknown
☒ Adults *please describe them below*

Primary source: school partnerhsip coordinators
Secondary source: Households in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. School staff involved in the Comenius school partnerships programme

Research methods to be used (tick all that apply – this information will be recorded on a database of the types of work being presented to Ethics Committees)
☐ Interviews
☐ Focus groups
☐ Questionnaire
☐ Action research
☐ Observation
☐ Systematic review
☐ Randomised controlled trial
☒ Literature review
☐ Use of personal records

☒ Other Analysis of pre-exising databases

Institute of Education, University of London
Ethics Approval for Doctoral Student Research Projects:
Planned Research and Ethical considerations.

1. Summary of planned research (please indicate the purpose of the research, its aims, main research questions, and research design. It's expected that this will take approx. 200–300 words, though you may write more if you feel it is necessary)

The aim of my thesis is to identify the constituent parts of a school partnership that is successful for all concerned and to consider whether these elements are universal. Pivotal to my study is an extensive literature review. The review will fall into three phases. Firstly, I will examine the literature on the politics and significance of school partnerships in the UK in order to provide the context for the study. Secondly, I will develop the theoretical framework that will underpin my research. I anticipate that a range of different outcomes from my research questions will be associated with different theoretical perspectives. I know some of these to be very persuasive. At this time I believe it is essential to maintain a consistent theoretical framework, although as I learn more I am aware that my own perspective may shift. The final stage of the literature review will identify the characteristics of school partnerships that have been perceived to be successful. Using the identified characteristics, a theoretical standard for successful school partnerships will be proposed.

In order to critically review the value of the theoretical standard, it will be subjected to a series of tests using data from the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme, Comenius. Data from the programme will be used to evaluate whether theory reflects practice. This data is already in existence and has been provided by schools to the national agency as a part of the programme's grant agreement. My study involves the analysis of this data in order to elicit the practitioners' views of successful school partnerships. Previous work, involving interviews that I carried out on behalf of the national agency will be revisited to ensure that all the learning from this work has been fully captured in the light of the national agency's current focus. This will not contravene the stated purpose of the interviews. The national agency, as part of their role in monitoring the impact of the programme, is keen to know whether Comenius aligns with good practice in terms of school partnerships. The Uk Comenius schools' views of successful partnerships will be correlated with their deprivation score to determine whether, in the UK, deprivation influences the perception of a successful school partnership.

The deprivation score will be based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The IMD for England is compiled by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for small areas. Similar indices are compiled for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This data is publically available.

Research questions:
The research questions will fall into two main areas. The first area considers the development of a theoretical standard and the second tests that standard. The questions are:
1. What is a 'successful' school partnership? This simple question covers complex

issues, such as the interpretation of success from different perspectives and from different contexts, including deprivation. This overarching question will be broken down into further questions, such as:

- **What are the indicators of a successful school partnership?**
- **Are they universal for all multicultural partnerships?**
- **Are they the same for all partners in the partnership?**
- **Can a theoretical standard be proposed for successful school partnerships?**
- **What is the benefit to the UK in 2011-12 of developing successful school partnerships? Does the identified UK benefit align with the components of the theoretical standard?**

2. To what extent do UK Comenius practitioners perceive their partnerships as being successful? Can their perceptions be validated using the findings in the literature review? Has the programme developed an awareness, in the UK schools, of their partners' needs and the impact of the partnership on their overseas partners? This research area will also include considerations of further questions, such as:

- **In the UK is deprivation a factor that affects the perception of success in terms of school partnerships? Does deprivation negate the universality of the theoretical standard?**
- **What are the perceived obstacles to achieving a successful partnership?**
- **How can the obstacles be overcome?**
- **How valid are these perceptions?**

As part of the final concluding section a further question will be raised:

- **Does objectivism provide a compelling epistemological perspective for this study?**

Stages of the research:

1) Literature review – in three phases

2) Methodology – identify the underpinning theoretical perspective and utilise the literature review to refine the method.

3) Method: - review the Comenius programme's wide range of secondary data with the national agency and agree with them what is to be used; develop, with the national agency, a sampling frame for the selection of the data, (likely to be schools' annual reports). Update my database that links postcodes to IMD to include the latest IMD figures.

4) Analysis of data: utilising the secondary data identify what the Comenius schools perceive successful school partnerships to be and correlate this with their deprivation score. Correlate the UK Comenius perceptions of successful school partnerships with the theoretical standard.

2. Specific ethical issues

(Outline the main ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research, and how they will be addressed. It's expected that this will require approx. 200–300 words. though you may write more if you feel it is necessary. You will find information in the notes about answering this question)

There are few ethical issues associated with this research as the majority of the information is already in the public domain. The indices of multiple deprivation can be downloaded from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website. The information which links postcodes to the LSOA can be purchased from the ONS. Schools' postcodes are available through Edubase. The schools in the Comenius programme have given the national agency permission to store their details on their database and to utilise this information to demonstrate how the programme is meeting its key performance indicators, which include developing high quality school partnerships. The national agency has given the researcher permission to work on the database by providing her with access to the database. The databases do not reveal any information about individuals. None of the schools will be identified. The national agency has also given the researcher permission to do this work as part of her doctorate. A written agreement is in place which covers the scope of the work, the approach to be taken, the deadline and the ownership of the information. This is a consultancy report which is confidential to the sponsor. The findings will be communicated in a clear and easy-to-understand style. The researcher is a disinterested party.

Ethical issues relating to the following have been considered:

- gaining access to the Comenius data - the national agency will provide the data to the researcher as a part of the consultancy.
- utilising previous gathered interview data – this data was collected by me on behalf of the Comenius programme to identify barriers to participation. The interview data will be revisited in order to understand better whether there is a relationship between barriers to participation and perceived success criteria for school partnerships. The original aim of the interview of which there are 18 will not be contravened.
- gaining access to the data on deprivation - much of the data can be downloaded from the internet, and some has already been purchased for the Institutional Focused Study.
- confidentiality: all information at individual school level will remain confidential.
- dual relationships in the work context: professional and researcher - there is no conflict of interest.
- dissemination - the information will be made public in the form of a report and all will be able to view it.
- giving feedback and reporting (critical) findings - this relates only to the programme managers and a relationship will be built to ensure that the feedback is developmental and in no way destructive.
- conflict of values - any conflict of values will be made open in the report.
- accountability - the written agreement with the programme managers will ensure that the work is done in time and to the requirements.
- protection of participants - there are no individual participants, only individual schools and these will not be identified.

3. Attachments

Please attach the following items to this form:

- The proposal or project outline for the project
- Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee, if applicable

- Where available, information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research.

4. Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project			
Signed	A Mulcock	Date	27th July 2014

School Use

Date considered:

Approved and reported to FREC	☐
Referred back to applicant and supervisor	☐
Referred on to FREC	☐

Signature of Supervisor: Charlie Owen.

Signature of Advisory committee member: Louise Phillips

Appendix 21: Recommendations

The recommendations that arise from the study fall into three groups:

- The programme
- Practitioner guidance
- Final reporting

21.1 The programme

Key recommendations for the programme are:

- To alleviate some of the major issues identified in Chapter 7 above that relate to workload in its broadest sense, such as:
  - Staff turnover and staff sickness
  - Lack of time/time management
  - High workload
    - SUGGESTION: a team of at least three are required to be the named individuals responsible for the project. This could include teachers, support staff, parents and governors.

- To provide an over-arching view of the project as a whole to complement the grade given to the reports by the independent assessors (Subsection 6.1.2.2 considers this in greater detail):
    - SUGGESTION: provide the school with a self-evaluation framework, such as one used in Wales to evaluate the international dimension education (Nicholas, 2010), to enable institutions to assess themselves against a benchmark. This would provide the school with a good source of evidence to show the impact of the intervention to meet its own requirements and could be used in the final report as evidence to substantiate the self-evaluation.

- To provide, at programme level, criteria for assessment that will enable report writers and those assessing the reports to evaluate the outcomes and impact. There is a little guidance to enable both the assessed and the assessors to

have a common understanding of the criteria for evaluation, and consequently interpretations vary widely. If the suggestion in the bullet point above were adopted, the criteria referred to here would be part of the self-evaluation framework. Subsection 6.1.2.1 considers the suggestion more fully:

  - SUGGESTION: provide clear assessment criteria to support self-assessment by the project coordinators and assessment of the final reports.

- To develop community partners at a strategic level so that schools can partner with branches at a local level:
  - SUGGESTION: develop an interest for the programme at the strategic level with, for example, a national supermarket or a bank, so that schools engaged in Comenius projects can liaise with the partner at the local level. This would reduce the workload, which would be particularly helpful for small schools, as there would be avenues already developed that would enable valuable links to be made between schools and their local communities.

21.2 Practitioner guidance

The study has identified areas that would benefit from greater guidance and support, and some of these have been mentioned in the section above. Additional areas include:

- Risk assessment forum for developing risk assessment for international travel: this would have a wider application than Comenius and would be useful for other programmes

- A forum to support the engagement of the local community and parents not directly involved in the programme. This would encompass:
  - Providing case-studies to be used by schools, such as those in rural areas and those catering for pupils with special educational needs, to demonstrate to local companies the value of engaging with smaller local schools
  - Developing an understanding of how schools with a wide catchment area can engage the local community

- A forum for sharing experiences so that new applicants can build on the learning from other projects. For example, some schools found that the project did not develop the language capabilities of the students as much as anticipated, because the partner schools were keen to use English as the medium for communication. Using the forum at the planning stage when building in partners' needs will help clarify processes and outcomes.

- Guidance to support the development of high but not unrealistic expectations. The analysis indicates that the programme enhances the curriculum, but does not change it on a large scale. Viewing Comenius as a change agent for the curriculum is not realistic in most institutions, but viewing it as a vehicle to enhance the curriculum certainly is reasonable.

21.3 Final reporting

A large number of comments relate to the difficulty in managing the final report. An analysis of the reports shows that:

- Much information is repeated in different sections:
  - SUGGESTION: report writers should only include a comment once and cross-reference if necessary

- Too much of the information is descriptive rather than evaluative:
  - SUGGESTION: report writers should be given examples to support them in evaluating their evidence rather than describing it at length.

- There is no comment of the effectiveness of the partnership from the other partners' perspectives:
  - SUGGESTION: all partners should write a short section in pdf for their other partners which can be uploaded at the time of the final report writing. This would provide the whole partnership view. These short sections could be copied from the institution's own final reports and therefore would require little additional work. The language of the partners' inputs would be a matter for discussion

- The value of the final reports are not maximised:
  - SUGGESTION: coordinators could be encouraged to share their expertise on an electronic forum so that others can search for solutions. The web content written by coordinator could be cut and pasted into the final report in answer to the appropriate question. No further addition would be needed. The evidence that the school was sharing its learning with a wider community would be sufficient. A coding from the webpage would validate the insertion.

- Greater guidance is required for the completion of the report
  - SUGGESTION: guidance is developed that provides greater clarity for schools completing the final report, so that outputs, outcomes and impact are differentiated for schools and the community, evidence is requested and its required format is clear and repetition is reduced. This is related to the third bullet point in the above Section 21.1 The Programme.

- Support for schools to evaluate their progress as part of the final report
  - SUGGESTION: an evaluation framework should be provided to enable institutions to evaluate their progress using a baseline. It would support the monitoring and evaluation of the programme and provide evidence to substantiate some of the assertions in the reports. This suggestion marries with the second bullet point the above Section 21.1.The Programme.