

**First year English Course for the curriculum LL (English minors)**

Lingua Inglese, I annualità, per il curriculum LL (seconda lingua)

**Class from 8 to 10 am on Fridays**

**Your interview Reports**

<a href="#">Click on name to see report</a>	Report	Audio	Comment	Mark
<a href="#">Emanuele Campa</a>	21/11/09	21/11/09	Well written, only minor imperfections. Clear, mostly just factual. Please give more interpretations next time – for example, you failed to say why the American students introduced themselves immediately (typical Italian students wouldn't and NOT just out of timidity... so what does this American behavior mean? express? tell you?). The recording of your conversation showed, surprisingly, culturally appropriate turn-taking procedures: congratulations! But too few verification routines.	28
<a href="#">Francesco De Giusti</a>	21/11/09	21/11/09	A little short (1 page long but... double spaced!!!)... I had to make a large number of corrections, too (many of which you could have eliminated, I'm sure, by reading the text again after one or two days). I liked your observation of the two different listening styles of the two interviewees. I disagree with your explanation of why American children gain independence earlier than Italians, but at least you attempted an explanation – it was an interesting hypothesis. As for your recording, it sounds as though you were reading (DON'T! You reduce empathy!). In spite of this, you got your interviewee to talk a lot (only one answer was monosyllabic).	24
<a href="#">Matteo Balice</a>	20/11/09	20/11/09	A little short. Your grammar and syntax are quite good!! See my comments on NO NAME's paper – you apparently worked together and so the comments are the same as to the content. In your recording you use good interview technique: you “prepare your interviewee psychologically” before asking a difficult question (you tell her your question will seem strange and that you made it up on the spot): this makes her less defensive.	25
<a href="#">Caterina Curci,</a>	20/11/09	20/11/09	Well written, even if there were a lot of syntactical anomalies. Very perspicacious, too. For example, you (correctly) surmised from your interviewees tone and facial expression that, although her parents do not ask her to help with the housework, she feels slightly guilty about it. You make several generalizations about “Americans”: remember that you interviewed a special type of American and only ONE of that type. As for your recording, you sound like you're reading (NEGATIVE: you loose empathy), although you regained empathy a little by calling your interviewee by her first name (“Rachel, do you think...”).	26
<a href="#">Giulia Morelli</a>	20/11/09	AUDIO MISSING	Extremely well written, relatively few formal imperfections. Thoughtful, too – although, as I said to other students, you jump to conclusions too rapidly. You didn't include the audio so I cannot comment on your interactive capabilities or give you a mark.	--
<a href="#">Elisa Iannilli</a>	20/11/09	AUDIO MISSING	Your report was well written, with several imperfections. You need to be more critical towards what you ask and the answers you receive. You keep comparing everything your interviewee says with you (“me,too... me as well... etc.). This is dangerous. First it seems like you are looking for a husband. Secondly you never really understand the other person if you have an inner Identikit (yourself) that you are comparing him to. You didn't include the audio so I cannot comment on your interactive capabilities or give you a mark.	--
<a href="#">Francesca Fontana</a>	20/11/09	20/11/09	Only half a page (the instructions said 1 or 2 pages!!!) and with many imperfections. Your account of the interview was accurate but you could have elaborated more on what your interviewees answers MEAN and how you interpreted them. For example you say that your interviewee “sometimes has dinner with her family and goes on picnics with them.” But what does this mean? To help you, I added: “ONLY sometimes she has dinner with her family” to show that you think this is unusual. But you could have said more, for example: “It is not clear if Rachel does not love her family and dislikes eating with them, or if love is expressed in other ways and independence is the	25

			most important value – so she is free to program her evenings as she wishes.” etc. etc. You see? This shows that you are not a passive recorder but an active, critical thinker. Nothing to say about the recording (the voice of the interviewer was Catherine's, not yours, right?).	
<a href="#">Federica Gabrielli</a>	20/11/09	AUDIO MISSING	One of the best written papers. Hardly any formal imperfections and very idiomatic in its expressiveness. Clear, coherent exposition (according to Anglo standards of clarity and coherence). Not enough reflection on what your interviewee's cultural traits mean, however. I can't comment on your interactional ability because you did not include the audio cassette.	29
<a href="#">Nadia Bobar</a>	19/11/09	19/11/09	Well, I'm happy to see that you're human. Your report has just as many formal imperfections as the other students!! Welcome to the class! Your report did stand out for one quality: you are the only student to use a list (1... 2... 3...) to make your points clearer and to make your exposition easier to follow. But like most reports it lacked interpretation of what you noticed and coherence in what you thought important enough to report: you mention “time spent at home,” “spirit of independence” and... “playing golf” as though they were three cultural traits of the same importance! An overall view is missing. As for your recording, you were very fluent and put your interviewees at ease giving constant, positive feedback (for example: “Ah, you parents are doctors, great, they save lives!”) You also use informal questioning that encourages answers; you do NOT say “What is your father?” bur rather “You father is...?” with a rising intonation. So your interviewee is encouraged to “complete your sentence.” Good strategy.	27
<a href="#">Andrea Lellis</a>	19/11/09	Same file as Matteo's	After reading your paper and listening to your recording, my only question is: what are you doing in this course? You should be in a II year major course!! Your paper was, formally, near perfect; it was well composed with a topical introduction, coherent progression and even a tag line at the end! My only complaint is the one I have made to other students: you should reflect more on the meaning of the cultural traits you discover and not simply report them at face value. As for your recording, you didn't identify yourself but I assume it was Matteo asking the first questions and you the last questions. In that case you were highly fluent although your cadence was stilted (out of fear? Or maybe you were feeling intimidated? Or scholastic influence?). It was obvious you both were reading most of the time and when you were, your interviewee had a somewhat stilted, “official” intonation in responding... so you were not getting her “gut” responses.	30

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Emanuele Campa

Before going out with them (Who? You didn't say!), we had already decided the topic to talk about. Fortunately we realised (realiZed is the more modern spelling) that the "The Family" was the best subject and the most interesting one. Mr.Boylan gave us five possible questions to ask them; then we invented other five.I t was not too difficult to do so because this topic really fascinated us.

When the American students arrived, they soon (immediately) presented themselves. At the first sight,they looked like cute and nice; we absolutely wanted to meet them and make conversation. (Use“cute” only to describe girls – boys are “nice looking”) Three of them,called Becca,Kareema and Colee came up to us and smiled. We started talking, then we sat down. Our conversation was very fluent and spontaneous. They were so kind and helped us using the language and forgave us (our errors) although since our English was not perfect.

We used a recorder to record their answers. Because of this spontaneity,we alternated these questions about

their family with others about themselves: we were very curious, too.

They **appaired** **appeared** interested, especially after **presenting** **we presented** our project. We worked in pairs. For example, I made questions and my friend observed their behaviour. We noticed their attitude wasn't too different from ours. Maybe the only difference between **the** American and Italian behaviour is the use of hands: I realized they didn't wave a lot. In particular, they used their voice or their face to **capture** **the** attention or if they wanted to be heard.

After the "formal" questions, we started making free conversation. A lot of topics were considered: what they usually do in their spare time, their opinions about Friendships, Politics and other interests, generally speaking. We sang, too. **;) (use smileys just in emails)**

We figured out that lots of them weren't Catholics, others instead believed in other religions especially if they had foreign origins. We knew they belonged to **an** **the** American Upper class, so their parents always have a permanent job. For example, Becka's parents are both doctors.

I was surprised when they explained **to** me the huge attachment they had **with** **to** their parents. I admitted that foreign people usually call us "mammoni", but even they are.

They just shared a few common interests, like music ideas; some of them loved the classical '70's rock. In the USA students have **a long period of holidays** **lots of vacation time** (they often spend 4 months with their families and friends); **instead** Italians don't. But they didn't share any other common value in particular.

I think it had been a great opportunity to find out about a different mentality and culture. These occasions give us the possibility to enter **into** contact with someone who **s is** **(don't use contractions in an academic paper)** different and thanks to which each of us can learn **and** **to** develop a mature mentality, **until** becoming an "open-minded" person or more international. I hope to meet them again, and there will be another opportunity to organize this, of course!

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Francesco De Giusti

### Recap of the American students interview

In my opinion, this project is a good way to learn **ing** English and to appreciate something about another lifestyle and culture, because we had **have** the chance to talk with some American students.

I arrived at **the** "Fiddler's Elbow", a pub in Downtown **of** Rome, where I met the American students and after a few minutes I followed the interview of my friends with two girls, and **afterward** I interviewed another girl. There are not **evidence** **evident** differences between our point **of** view about **the** family and theirs. The girls answered in the same way **at** the question "if, in American families **freedom** **independence** arrives sooner than in Italian ones?" **In** their opinion **freedom** **independence** arrives sooner than in Italian families, but it depends on what type of family **you live** **one has**. Here in Italy **it** is the same; some **guys** **young people** **(don't use the slang word "guys" in academic writing)** **arrive** **manage** to have more freedom than others; it depends. **Probably, maybe as** in American families **ies**, because the parents work **lots of** **many** **(avoid "lots of" in academic writing)** hours a day, **and** they can't follow **to much** their children **much**, so they "release" **their guys** **to them** **earlier**. (This is not a sufficient explanation: in many Italian families both the father and the mother work and are gone all day, yet the children remain tied to their parents and continue living at home until age 30! Why?? And why not in the U.S.??)

I **do** **asked** another question but this time I wanted **to** know something about one of the most famous cartoons in

the world, “the Simpsons”. I wanted to know if there are a true relationship between the representation of the “Simpsons” and the represent a real American family. They answered that it's only a parody of the typical American family, but probably sometimes this parody is not far from the real attitude of some families (and not only in the U.S.A). When I did made this interview, I observed their reactions. The first interviewee, when she was speaking, she moved a lot, but she looked at his her interviewer always (continually), and she was very interested from in the questions. The second girl sometimes she doesn't didn't follow with attention the questions attentively, but when she answered she was very expressive and exhaustive. They enjoyed a lot the interview considerably.

Finally, I think that work in this way like this could be very fair (??) and useful, because we can met other people and in at the same time it is a good chance occasion to improve and speak (to speak and improve) our English. (I don't think these are good reasons to do the Interview Exercise again. If you want to “meet people” and “improve your English by speaking it”, you can go to a pub alone, on your own, and find a girlfriend. The purpose of the Interview Exercise is different. It serves to learn how to ask the right questions in the right way in English, to get to understand an Anglo mentality... Ordinary conversation is not enough because you remain at the level of conventionality and stereotypes. So you need to learn English as an ethnographer.)

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Matteo Balice

Text after American student's interview

This is, in my opinion, a very good way of learning English, because it allowed me to appreciate the beauty of spoken English and the personality of some American students.

When we arrived at “the Fiddler's Elbow”, in the center of Rome, we met the American students and we immediately started to interview two girls. For me and my team-mate it was evident, after the interview interview, that there aren't lots of many differences (avoid “lots of” in academic writing) between our conception of the family and theirs; in fact when we asked to one of the interviewees if in American families freedom independence arrives sooner than in Italian families, they answered that it could depend on what kind of family you live in, just like it is in Italy. The most interesting answer, in my opinion, was given when we asked them (who? The antecedent is too remote.) our interviewees about American politicians' work, in particular if the family is as important as in Italian politicians' programs. Before the interview my team mate and me I used to think that America is the Nation of freedom, of uninteresting disinterest in the family; their answer revealed that American politicians make the give considerable importance of to family as a topic of their election campaign.

Another thing I noticed was their body language; in fact the two interviewees were very different by from this point of view; one was really communicative, because while she was speaking she moved a lot. The second one, instead, was quieter than the other one first, as and when she spoke she communicated with us only by facial expressions.

Finally, what I want to say about our interview is that this kind of work could be extremely useful, because in addition to learn and practice English we met some new friends, while amusing ourselves.

See my comments on NO NAME's paper – you apparently worked together and so the comments are the same.

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### Caterina Curci

Report of the interview done during the evening with Trinity College

Our interviewee comes from Washington D.C. Her name is Rachel, 21. **Me and my co-worker** **My fellow student and I** **(DON'T put "I" first, it sounds TERRIBLY EGOTISTICAL in English)** Francesca Fontana have interviewed Rachel in an Irish pub on Monday evening, during **a meeting** **an encounter** **(a meeting is for business)** with the American students of Trinity College.

Rachel looks **like agreeable** **happy** to answer to our questions about her family. She tells us that she has a brother older than her and a sister younger than her. Her brother lives in Northern California and her sister in Massachusetts, so **each other** **both** have their own **life** **lives**, away from home. When we ask her how often a year **do** her relatives visit her at home, she answers that they come every Christmas holidays, so only for important events. About her relationship with **her** parents **she** answers us that **she** has a good relationship with her mother in particular, who likes to go with Rachel and her sister to the cinema. **(This is typical of ONE KIND of American parent, who wants to be her/his child's FRIEND, not authority figure.)**

Rachel who **'s** **has been** in Italy **since** **for** four months **in** at Trinity College, talks a lot with her mother every day and describes her like a good mother, who encourages Rachel to be an independent woman. **(Are you envious?)**

In Rachel's home **it is** **an habit** **customary** to prepare dinner with all **the** family but not to eat together, so dinner is not a moment of "reunion" to explain what **it's** **has** happened during the day, as on the contrary is **the case** for the most Italian families.

With a smile Rachel **has** confessed to us that she **doesn't** **didn't** help her family **to** do **the** housework and probably her family doesn't ask her **for** help.

We have asked her if, in the future, **when** her grandparents get really old, **they** will live with her, as **in** a lot of Italians families **do**, but she **has** answered that probably they will remain in their home.

This meeting has been really interesting because **it** showed me some differences between American and Italian cultures ; **I can** **it** reinforces **the** **my** opinion that Italians have much stranger attachment to a traditional conception of **the** family than **the** Americans **do**, **which** **who** have a much modern idea of it.

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### Giulia Morelli

#### REPORT

On Monday, **the** 16th of November, **I and** **(DON'T put "I" first, it sounds EGOTISTICAL in English)** some of the students **of** **from** my **course of** English course and **I**, met some other students **of** **from** the Trinity College. This meeting **has been** **was** very interesting and important because we had the chance to speak with some native speakers. We met in a pub, so it was an informal event that produced an easier conversational **rapport** between us. We interviewed Will Hancock, a 21 years **old** boy, very funny and easygoing. We spoke about his family and we tried to understand the differences between the American and the Italian ways of life. Will's family is

composed by of 6 people and he thinks his family is very important in his life.

Talking with him we discovered that there are some differences but also a lots of many (avoid “lots of” in academic writing) common aspects in our family life lives. Will thinks Italian families is are bigger than his one, and that’s true! In fact he said that, excluding his immediate family, the other components, live in other American states and for this reason, they meet only once a year. In Italy, it’s different because usually the whole family lives in the same city so we have a closer relationships. Will loves very much his family very much and he misses them so badly, so for Christmas he will go back to Minnesota to spend his holidays with them, as well as I’ll do me (I’ll stay in Rome but with my family!). Otherwise, when he has some free time, he prefers to stay with his friends.

We told Will about our image impression of the American families, we told him that we know something about it through television and cinema. He was a little bit embarrassed because he said that what we see in TV or in films, is not absolutely true. (You didn't include the registration so I cannot hear what he said. Did he say it was “not absolutely true” or “absolutely not true”? There is a big difference between the two forms.) He said films and TV series exaggerate the American way of life so the only way to know the real American lifestyle is to speak with a native.

We and the Trinity College students, have different social positions: they are of the upper-class while we are of the middle-class; for this reason, we thought that they had a totally different life but it isn’t true. Will said that his parents paid to let permit him to travel and study here but he also told us that when he’s is (avoid contractions in academic writing) in America, he has to spend his own money for his daily life. They are used to working during the summer to save money for the following year. So I think there aren’t so many differences between us, in fact the most of Italian students work while they study so they can pay for their daily life without asking money to from their parents. But usually, the middle class students do that while in America all the students work and study at the same times. (I'm glad you made that last point because it is capital. So, you see, there IS a big difference: in Italy upper class children never work, so they learn to feel superior. In America many upper-class children are made to work, not out of necessity but for the discipline (the Protestant Work Ethic): so they learn to feel righteous. There is a big difference between “feeling superior” and “feeling righteous” and his explains, in part, the enormous difference in the mentality of the Italian and the American ruling classes.)

As I said before, Will thinks his family is very important in his life and he said he asked his parents for some advices in the important moments of his life. For example when he chose what to study in university, when he decided to come here in to Italy and (or so he said) he’ll ask them advices when he will decide the work of his life on his career. What could be different is that usually in Italian families, (not in mine), is that here the advices are is often not requested! What I mean is that parents want to decide for their sons’ children's life.

Talking with him I discovered that he loves listen the same kind of music that I like (what kind?), so we have common interests even if we don’t speak about the family or other “formal” topics.

From this experience, I understood that we can’t use stereotypes to describe or judge a culture, but we have to think that also in on the other side of the world, there are people just as we are, and not millionaire aliens! (Are you so sure, after just a few minutes conversation and agreement about musical tastes? Would you make the same conclusion about “being the same” if you could interview Osama bin Laden and discovered that he: 1. liked the same music as you do, 2. worked as a child and 3. is close to his family? Maybe there are more important questions about life than the ones you asked. Maybe you still know, after asking your three questions, practically nothing about about Will (or about Osama) and they are totally different from you – although in a pub they act like you.)

I hope we will have others another chances to meet foreign students and maybe to interview them on other topics so that we can know different aspects of this culture! I enjoyed very much the meeting very much!

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Elisa Iannilli

On Monday the 16th of November, me, Giulia, Federica, and other students of our English course of English and I (DON'T put "I" first, it sounds EGOTISTICAL in English), had an informal meeting with the students of Trinity College. They are American students who are here for the U.S. Equivalent of an Erasmus Project. I think it's very important to understand the differences between our culture and another way of life.

We interviewed a boy, his whose name is Will Hancock and he's 21.

He's been was very funny and sociable with us. At the beginning we were a little bit shy but then we understood it was an unique occasion for us to speak with an American boy. So we became braver. I noticed that there aren't so many differences between our families.

For example, he told said that the stereotype of the American, rich and lazy boy, it's is not absolutely true; (You didn't include the registration so I cannot hear what he said. Did he say it was "not absolutely true" or "absolutely not true"? There is a big difference between the two forms.) in fact, he worked during the summer to save some money. Will said his parents paid for this travel but in America he has to spend only his own money for his daily everyday life. (Your partner Giulia made an interesting observation that you should consider. She said that in Italy only middle or lower class youths work, while in America even upper class youths work – for example, during summer vacation. So, you see, there IS a big difference: in Italy upper class children never work, so they learn to feel superior. While in America many upper-class children are made to work, not out of necessity but for the discipline (the Protestant Work Ethic): so they learn to feel righteous. There is a big difference between "feeling superior" and "feeling righteous" and he explains, in part, the enormous difference in the mentality of the Italian and the American ruling classes.)

We see American families through the cinemas and TV series, but he said that this image is not true, that films exaggerate the American way of life. We told him about our stereotypes on of Americans and he told us about his ones about regarding Italians. and What came out, is that each one stereotype has got true and false sides. Will's family is composed by of 6 people but he said that here in Italy we have a bigger families. (This is an old stereotype. Didn't you correct him? Now the birth rate in Italy is only 1.2 children per family.) He told us that he meets his relatives only once a year because they live in other American states while here in Italy, we have the tradition of being more closed. In general, our uncles or our grandparents, live in our same city and we meet them at least once a week.

Will said he misses so bad his family badly but for Christmas he'll go back to Minnesota for some a few weeks. In this case, there are no differences in facts: we, too, spend our Christmas He said his family is very holidays with our families. He said his family is important in his life but they don't influenced his choices while here in Italy, families want to chose their son's children's life lives. Will told us that he asks his parents for some advices but he decides on his own.

I think his choice to move from his country to study here it's is very courageous and I hope that he will enjoy this period (his sojourn) in Rome. I love so much music so much, especially I enjoy listening to a very famous group, the Blink182; so I was very curious to know his musical tastes. I was very surprised to know learn that Will loves this group, too.

When he has some free time he loves to sing some songs of this group.

He is a shopaholic but, like the other students he knows that shopping it's so is amazing fun as well as expensive.

He also said he loves to travel all around the world; me as well as me.

I think this experience has been very important for us because I understood that the best way to learn a language, in this case English, is to practice it.

(This is not true, Elisa. It SEEMS true because you learn to speak more fluently with direct contact and so you

are happy. But you also learn to misunderstand (thinking you have understood) and to make your typical errors a habit, so you do not improve the quality of your understanding/speaking. You do not learn culturally-appropriate strategies to get information and make yourself REALLY understood. In conclusion, the best way to study English is through a COMBINATION of classroom simulations (with recordings and videos) that PREPARE YOU ADEQUATELY for real life encounters and THEN use real life encounters for practice. But you should NOT try to LEARN just by practice.)

So, I hope that in the future we could have some more opportunities with other foreign students. (Even students who don't like the Blink 182?) ;-)

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Francesca Fontana

## The report of the day with the American students

On Monday evening, at 20:30 8:30 pm, my friend Caterina Curci and I met the American students of Trinity College. The meeting place was in a pub in the centre of Rome near Termini Station . We are the students of Roma3 and this meeting was organized for only the students of the first year. Our interview interviewee's name is (avoid contractions in academic writing) Rachel; she's 21 and comes from Washington D.C. She has an older brother older, who lives in Northern California, and a sister younger, who lives in Massachusetts .

Rachel is has been in Rome since for 4 M months and her parents visit her every Christmas or during the holidays. She has a good relationship with her parents, especially with her mother; she talks a lot every day with her; she (who? Rachel? Probably not. So specify: "her mother...") encourages her and she thinks that wants Rachel is to be a very independent girl; but the girl confessed to us that she never helps never her family to do the housework.

In Italy dinner is a moment of meeting encounter who where one can talk about, for example, what's has (avoid contractions in academic writing) happened during the day. For Rachel it is different. Only sometimes she has a dinner with her parents and she goes out for a pick nick picnic with her mother and her sister once in a while. Finally she thinks that her parents, when they get really old, they will live in their home (whose home? The grandparents' home? Or Rachel's family's home?). This was the last question for Rachel.

It was a great experience and we talked with other American students. They were very kind and friendly with us. They wanted know what we do during the week-end, what kind of music we listen to or what kind of sport we practice. The meeting ended at 23.00 o'clock 11 pm.

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Nadia Bobar



I\* noticed that it's really exist a cultural differences between American and Italian families really exist. We did made an interview to with three students, two girls and one boy. I\* was surprised by their informality. (\*Avoid "I" in academic writing. Use impersonal forms: "It would seem that differences exist...")

- 1) They come from good families.
- 2) The religion is important for some one of them, for others it is not.
- 3) The time who they spend with their families is less than the time that Italians spend with theirs. The American students said that they spend 2-3 months of a year, on holidays with their families. (on in the summer, for at Easter). The rest of time they stay in at college.
- 4) Their relatives live in other towns, other states. The relatives come for visits 2-3 times a year.
- 5) Some of this students share common ideals with their families like religion, education, travels (travels are not "ideals", they are "likes." Maybe you mean: "spirit of adventure"), etc.
- 6) They have different religions into this group within the same family.
- 7) They have one or two brothers (are you saying this is a general trend of all Americans??? Brothers are male: no sisters? Maybe you mean: "children".)
- 8) The family is important for them. (Yes, but HOW is it important? This statement is too generic: in EVERY culture families are important, but they are important for different reasons and in different ways).
- 9) One of the girls listens to classical a American rock in the family.
- 10) Their grandparents live in other town, states.
- 10) Some of them know what they want to become. One of the girls wants to become a doctor.
- 11) The boy plays piano and trombone. After the college he wants to leave home and live alone. He wants a dog, too.
- 12) They like Italian culture; they think that our project about differences between American and Italian families is interesting.

The most important differences I noticed between American and Italian families were: the American students are spending less time with the family that Italians do. The relatives of American students often live in other towns, states. The American students often leave home after college.

I also found that usually, young Americans doesn't play golf. They said that they are feeling good in Italy and they are studying Italian, too. When he answered, the boy he seemed a little shy, innocent, like a child. The girls, specially Kavitha, was were really sure of themselves; she Kavitha looked to me to be very calm while she spoke. We had spoken about sport, too, and other things, even if we don't didn't recorded them that part of the conversation.

This interview it was for me an occasion to meet an other another culture, other persons, and I must say that it was very beautiful nice/rewarding/enjoyable... ("beauty" is esthetic).

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### Federica Gabrielli

Last Monday, on November 16th, with some classmates I met a group of Americans students at the oldest "real Irish" pub in Rome, near S. Maria Maggiore's Church. It was an informal and very interesting meeting encounter because we knew got to know something about American culture and lifestyle aspects.

The object of this meeting encounter was an interview to of an American student about his family. Giulia, Elisa and I interviewed a boy, Will, who came from Minnesota and he was 21. He was a nice, funny and sociable boy and he replied very candidly to our questions.

At the beginning, we were a little bit embarrassed but, later, we continued to talk without any problems. He said

that he loves his family, that it is an important and essential value in his life. He enjoys spending time with his parents, in particular during the festivities and now that he's studying here, in Rome, he misses his family very much.

During our interview we talked about some differences between Italian and American culture and lifestyles and about some possible stereotypes linked to the concept of family. In fact some one people says that the family has an high value for the Italians, differently for from Americans. But according to Will, these stereotypes aren't true, because for him the American's families are not like those families that we always see on Tv but they are just normal families, even if there are some differences from Italian's ones. For example, he thinks that Italian's families are bigger than American's ones (This is an old stereotype. Didn't you correct him? Now the birth rate in Italy is only 1.2 children per family.), that are generally smaller and further from their relatives. In fact Will has a lot of relatives but unfortunately they live outside his country state, in New York, in Pensilvenia and in California and in general he meets them once a year.

He has a lot of hobbies: he plays the saxophone, he loves singing and when he has free time he goes to sing with his friends in a pub. He loves dancing, too, and sometimes he goes to the a disco. He loves music, in particular rock music, and his favourite band is "The Blink 182", a famous group known in Italy, too. Later, he talked about his dreams and he said that his biggest dream is travelling around the world to visit and to understand other cultures; that's why he decided to come to Italy. He came here not only to study but also because he wanted to do make a new and courageous experience in an other another part of the world and he said that he worked hard last summer to manage to do it.

I think that making this interview was a brilliant experience, unforgettable, very funny enjoyable ("funny" = it makes you laugh) but also very instructive because I understood that the only way to learn to speaking a foreign language is to practice it and this evening, getting together with Trinity College students, was a perfect chance to do it. (You say that the "only way to learn to speak a foreign language is to practice it." This is not true, Federica. It SEEMS true because you learn to speak more fluently with direct contact and so you are happy to have practice. But you also learn to misunderstand (thinking you have understood) and to make your typical errors a habit, so you do not improve the quality of your understanding/speaking. You do not learn culturally-appropriate strategies to get information and make yourself REALLY understood. In conclusion, the best way to study English is through a COMBINATION of classroom simulations (with recordings and videos) that PREPARE YOU ADEQUATELY for real life encounters and THEN use real life encounters for practice. But you should NOT try to LEARN just by practice.)

I hope that we will be able to do an other another meeting encounter like this very soon because I think it's is (avoid contractions in academic writing) one of the most important and useful experiences for us.

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Andrea Lellis

1 - How often a year do one or more of your relatives come for a visit to your home?

- They usually come two times a year. They come for Christmas and they spend it at home and then they come in the middle of the year, in June or July.

2 - How much vacation time do you spend at home or with relatives? (yes/no)

a) Most of your weekends? -Yes

b) Half or more of your Christmas vacation? -Yes

c) Your Easter vacation? -Yes

d) Most of your short holiday breaks? -Most of them, yes

c) Half or more of your summer vacation? -Yes

3 - Did you seek the opinion of parents and/or relatives before deciding?

- For some things I do, for other things I decide on my own

4 - Up to what age could you continue to live with your parents without feeling it strange to do so?

- Well, I am 21 years old and I'm still living with my parents, and I will probably live with them until I get married. (Student) Really? - I'm a girl! It's different for boys!

5 - What percentage of your spending money, plus what you consume is furnished by your parents?

- Now I'm in school so I don't work, so everything is given to me by my parents.

6 - Which kind of relationship do you prefer having with your parents; do you prefer to see them as friends or as strict rulers?

- No, no my parents are my friends, and I have a very good relationship with them.

Is that because you are Hispano-American?

- Yes, it has a lot to do with it.

So, how is it in general?

- All my friends are also Hispanic so I don't really have the experience of having American friends whose parents are more strict with them. All my friend's parents are their friends.

7 - Often the idea of an Italian family is associated with close relationship, (you know the Godfather?) while from our point of view we see American families as a synonym of freedom, even excessive, for boys. Do you agree?

- I agree with that. In the past it might have been that children just respected their parents, had them like at a distance. But now I feel like it's more close. Do you think the parents don't have control over the kids?

(Student) Yes.

- Yes, I think that's true; I agree with that.

8 - You might not know the Italian costumes customs, but do you think a young American boy or girl reaches independence sooner or later than an Italian one?

- I think sooner. What I learnt from Italian costumes may be wrong, but a lot of kids stay at home longer than they used to. I might be wrong, but that's what I think. I think that kids in America leave their home earlier than the Italian ones.

9 - Most of the Italians know American lifestyle through films and TV series. Do families like the Simpsons reflect an ordinary American family?

- No. Not like the Simpsons

(student) So family Guy!

- No, it's not like that. I think it's an exaggeration, a parody. I think the American family might not be like the Italian family, but families are close. I think people have the idea that an American family is a kind of cold and the kids are distant from the parents, but it's different. It might surprise you to see how families are close.

10 - In Italy family's values are extremely important, and this is also due to the influence of the Catholic Church. Is in America is the family so important?

- Yes, I think all the family values are important but I don't think they are influenced by the Catholic Church, like in Italy. I think people realise that your family is all you have and it is the only thing you have.

And in politics?

- I think it could be like in Italy. I think politicians try to relate to the American people and say things in order to protect their family and protect their family's future.

I believe this project is a great opportunity for students. For just even the fact that it allows the chance to meet people from the other side of the world, who as I soon realised, have a completely different point of view from ours. But as it is a well known fact, that one can learn more about their one's own culture by immersing themselves oneself into another one. Before Monday I had never had a discussion detailing how life actually is in the USA and the cultural comparisons with my life here in Italy. I was glad to discover that the students I interviewed had Hispanic origins, as this allowed me to find out how the day to day life is for immigrants in the USA. We exchanged thoughts on how the standard American family and Hispanic family are differentiated, then we kept talking about that and I was pleasantly surprised to find out that certain values, for instance the roles in a typical family, are given the same importance in America as they are in Italy. There are (I now realise) a few misconceptions here of the dynamics of an American family.

One thing that really surprised me was the lack of discipline with children. I feel this aspect close to me, as I have a younger brother and I am extremely worried about how the younger generations seem to be losing all sense of respect and some good old fashioned manners. Personally I see this as a proof of the globalization of our world.

Considering this project from an academic perspective I am convinced that this could be a highly productive method of learning, unknown to Italian schools. In fact it focuses only on what we can learn on from books, without offering us the possibility to practice what we study; often we are asked to learn by heart, and this doesn't make our skills improve at all. In this way we are not encouraged to study, and the result is that we see University as boring stuff, a compulsion that we try to avoid in the most different ways, like for example sitting in the back of the room.

As we really appreciated this beneficial initiative, we decided to keep in contact with these nice students. We exchanged our mail addresses; sometimes we chat on the internet and we hope we are going to see each other another time. Therefore we are going to have a good time again, while improving our English - nothing better than killing two birds with one stone!

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