

Producing and directing for multimedia at the University of Luton

The Situation

This video case study is part of a three year consortium project that is looking at Group Work Assessment in Media Production. Six higher education institutions have been involved in recording their method of assessing student groups involved in different areas of media production.

[Music sting]

Student: My idea's called childhood... it's basically taking the average age of a person on the Internet which is in between 20 to 30 and it's looking at a site that's based on nostalgia... [fades out].

Student: ...to design a web site for MKWR. It deals with black hair and beauty and so when I was looking about it, going about the idea to see if there was any other web sites, there was web sites like Vidal Sassoon and Tony and Guy that have examples...

Student: My project's going to be about a marina, it's about boats and yachts and sailing and jet skis...

[Music sting]

Peter Dean: Let's start talking about this second assignment then. What I've got for you today is the second assignment details printed out for you. The second assignment is now a group assignment. At the end you're going to do a presentation. It's a sort of pseudo-industry working kind of situation if you can imagine, where you've done the pitch of the idea. Originally the client has sort of said yes, we're basically interested, can you go away and work that up a bit for us? Then you're all going to come back and this is like your second visit to the client and you've got some visuals to show and a bit of stuff working to give a better idea of what the thing is.

[Music sting]

Eloise Huxor: It all got through, with tailored fashion, manage a mini, ENT selector, music machines, superhero community and problem page, ok, so that at least gives you a basis for what you're ideas are going to be... [fades out].

Student: I was surprised that mine got through because I did it like sort of like late, but it seemed alright and I think I boosted up the third presentation...

Student: I think mine became better with the presentation. I thought of more ideas during the presentation actually...

Student: Yeah... the web site...

Student: Same as mine...

Student: I wasn't too bothered about not getting through. I got quite good feedback from people so I wasn't surprised, you know... I thought my idea was quite a practical idea for this kind of situation, but I'm happy enough not doing it.

Narrator: How about you?

Student: I don't have a problem with working in different groups or with different people and I still like my idea and I can do it in time... I can still do it myself.

[Music sting]

Student: The mouth... oh the mouth... I'm not entirely sure where we're going to... we just need to sort of like make up something...

Student: [Inaudible]

Student: Yes, but we'll leave that up to the artist.

Elouise Huxor: Now obviously there's more roles that you'll take on than the amount of people that will be here, so you're going to need to double up on yourselves and some of them fit very well together, but just to give you an idea you've got a Project Manager and Producer, and again the person that looks after that will be looking after the over all project, making sure that everything goes well, that you do your time scales right, deadlines, you organise the group meetings, you just make sure everything's going on track for the project.

Student: I can do it...

Student: You can do that?

Student: I can do that... [laughs].

Elouise Huxor: You've got Graphic Designer, Information Architect. As I said again in my lecture a couple of weeks ago about the Information Architect, it's very much about the layout of the information you put across, but someone should be looking at the over all effect and should be actually responsible for the building of [inaudible – talking]. Then you've got a Content Researcher or Writer... when I say Software Developer it will be using the main graphics package, like Dream Weaver and Flash.

Student: I've been designated ordering about person....

Student: Director

Student: Director, that would be the word.

Student: That's because it was his idea...

Student: What are you on?

Student: Actual site design along with Andrew [ph]. The actual production of the site itself...

Student: Somebody might take the characters and storyboards and how it's going to look...

Student: And we have to do everything else [laughter].

Narrator: Are you happy with your work here?

Student: No, I'm going to try and do some site designs

Student: Which is like making up a diary sort of thing so you have a lot, it's not just writing...

Student: And storyboards as well, character descriptions...

Student: And research has got to be done...

[Music sting]

Student: Well, I formed group with Daniel and Diane [ph] and I was planning on doing a new idea.

Student: Oh, ok. So...

Student: I was planning on doing the house where I live in now and use the Quick Time VR...

Student: And this is based on your... on...

Student: On where I'm living now, but it could be anything else, it's just because it's easily accessible for me.

Student: Yes, yes that's true. But why would people want to look at it?

Student: Well it's interesting, if someone is actually living there, why do people watch Big Brother?

Peter Dean: Ok, right, so I think we need to work on the idea some more. I mean you obviously can choose a new idea, obviously you haven't had the working time on it...

Student: Yes.

Peter Dean: So you've got some more development you need to do there, with... when you've got your group together, do that after Christmas. Good.

Peter Dean: Ok, how are you getting on?

Student: Well actually I didn't find a group yet because nobody has appeared at the class any more, so there was only two groups, and they are already choosing who to work with.

Peter Dean: Because naturally we're in the run up to Christmas and we always tend to run into this next break, because naturally it works out that it's quite difficult to get together and work over Christmas.

Student: Yes, especially at this time as the assignment submission...

Peter Dean: But when we get back after Christmas then the first week back really we'll have to work quite hard in tying up those loose ends, 'cause the groups all really have to be formed by then. Because it's not that long to the deadline, three weeks... three weeks.

[Music sting].

Student: We could look at your stuff today, but we can't can we?

Student: No, 'cause the computers are messed up.

Student: Which is no fault of our own....

Student: Which is no fault of our own. For reasons we don't actually know anyway, and we won't get an extension, because well I don't really want to be here next week... to be honest... you can't even surf the net either, it's not...

Student: Well we'll see... once we've got all the information together...

Student: They've got all of Wednesday afternoon and evening, maybe allowing a bit of...

Student: I prefer to get it like sort of... most of it finished before then so we're not in like a big, mad rush.

[Music sting].

Peter Dean: We asked them to just run round who has done what, because one of the answers you often get is that well we all did a bit of everything, which indicates that it's been a bit ad hoc.

Eloise Huxor: Do you want to go through some of your roles? I know you talked a little bit about graphics, but do you want to speak a bit more fully about what each of you did?

Student: Well, Claire as I said did all the doodling and then went over them with the pen and then I coloured them all in with my big felt tips and Lara was in charge of the...

Peter Dean: You can teach students about management skills and group dynamics...

Peter Dean: Every time I think about it I think we could do with beefing that up and talking to them more formally about the way in which production teams work and groups work and that aspect of it, irrespective of the content and the production process.

Eloise Huxor: But there's a bit of a play-off between how much you actually teach them with the software, to how much time you've got to spend on both, but I hope very much in our tutorials that comes across as much as this sort of initial talking about group management.

Student: Wolf man... there are kind of generic types and everyone sort of recognised a variation on characters from elsewhere. Then from there you go onto the actual story itself, the first page, and it just sort of sets the scene, it shows the street and it has an explanation of what you're doing there...

Narrator: You've got a B+?

Students: We all got the same grade.

Narrator: Is that fair?

Student: I suppose so...

Student: I'd say it's very fair.

Student: We all put a lot of time into it, in the end, so it's fair enough.

Student: Considering the problems we had, like the entire computers shutting down for a day, two days before the deadline, was quite hard.

Narrator: What about this other quite delicate thing? Like you're four individuals working as a team and you've all got exactly the same grade, is that fair? Are you happy with that?

Student: I think some of the other groups are a bit unhappy about that because the other groups got individual grades, which I thought was a bit odd, because I thought it would be rather difficult to tell from a presentation, who had actually done the work. But in our presentation all of us actually spoke at one point.

Narrator: In the other group, two of the students obtained at C+ and the other two were given a D+. The student who had difficulty joining a production group before Christmas, did not submit any work for this assignment.

Peter Dean: The emphasis I think in the second year is on process, it's about production management and production techniques and by the third year it then comes together and so they have the skills to work through the process to produce a product, which is innovative and interesting and exciting.

[Music sting].

[End of programme].