

### **Mini DV tape three: Bournemouth University**

- Interviewer:* First of all about where we start looking at how groups are formed. We formed you into groups for this year, can you give me an opinion on that method of doing it and do you think that's the right way to do it?
- Student A (male): I think it's a good way of doing it because at the end of the day we're all new to the course and everyone's new and you don't know what people's weaknesses and strengths are at the start, so basically the first year is just like kind of like building a stage and then you learn from that, really. I thought it went quite well.
- Student B (female): Yeah, I'm glad you put us in groups because when we first got here it was quite daunting sort of sat in a lecture theatre and you've made like, there's a couple of people you sort of latch on to and then it's quite daunting, so I'm glad that we were put into groups rather than having to do it ourselves.
- Student A: Definitely. I think yeah, basically that's it really, I think it's good to just start off that way and then you learn for maybe next year or the years on you know who's good at what and who's not and you can kind of build upon that.
- Interviewer:* Ok, so say in the third year, where you're involved in doing minor shoots and major shoots for your degree, how would you feel if we still put you into groups?
- Student A: I think if you looked at it, it depends how you put us into groups. If you did look at peoples' weaknesses and strengths and kind of mixed it up I think it would work well, but I mean again if it was just random I think it wouldn't work well, I think it'd be maybe too many editors or too many people doing the same... wanting to do the same thing and it just wouldn't work I don't think at all.
- Student B: I don't know, I still have mixed feelings about it because I think if you still put us in groups it might still work, but then you can feel quite restricted, but then if you leave people to do their own devices, like make up their own groups, I think sometimes, like this year, especially when people have got in their own groups, do their own separate projects like you know who's good at what, so all the people who maybe haven't sort of come out of themselves yet, 'cause it takes a lot of people quite a long time to kind of be themselves here. It's taken me quite a while to sort of let myself be who I wanted to be here and I think people would just get

disregarded and put to the bottom of the group so they wouldn't be wanted, so I think it might, it could go one of two ways.

Student A: You could end up with like a Dream Team and then like a kind of, a kind of just average sort of group which wouldn't kind of excel as much as the other upper group you see, so it all depends. As I say in a way that could work if you put us in groups if you've done it right, but I don't know, it depends.

*Interviewer: Ok, so at the moment in the third year you do sort yourselves into your own groups... when you come to do it that way, how will you select who you work with?*

Student B: I'd go with who I thought would be the best at working on my project so I know at the moment, I know there's people who are quite good at editing and who want to specialise in editing so the way I've seen them work this year I know I think I'd quite like, you sort of remember and think I'd quite like to work with them again because you know they're quite good at one thing, then it's hard because as we have been put in groups I feel the year's kind of separated in half and there's half of the group there's say about 20 people I know really well and there's another 20, I still don't know some people's names because I've never worked with them, I sit with them in a lecture and that's it, so I've never ever worked with them so I wouldn't have a clue what they were good at and what they weren't good at.

Student A: Can I just say I would choose people for what they're good at, so for editing or whatever, but I would also choose people that I have worked with who I've got on with and people maybe didn't have as good skills as some other people, but after the first two years you get on with those people and they're reliable, that's another way. It would be good to choose them ourselves, I reckon.

*Interviewer: Do you think there's a kind of balance between people who you know you can get on with and are professional and who would have good skills?*

Student A: Yeah, most definitely. I'd always go for the person who had the basic skills but was a lot less ego driven and kind of you could get on with a lot better. That's why it's a good way to choose it because if you did get split up into groups by your tutor or so forth, you could get chunked in with a load of people who all kind of wanted to craft it themselves you know and not role plays.

*Interviewer:* Ok, so that's about how we form the groups and obviously you've been put into groups this year. Now in terms of when you come to assess each other, which is these peer assessments, there's particular criteria that you've been given to assess groups, to assess each other. Do you understand that criteria, do you remember what any of that is? What we mean by criteria to assess?

**Student B:** I can remember vaguely what the criteria was, but it was... I mean when we were first told we were doing a peer assessment, and I was the course rep this year, I had a lot of people come to me worried about it because they maybe didn't get on with people in their groups or there were sort of grudges because some people were better than others, there would be kind of a lot of snide comments made and people would maybe write bad things about them, but when you actually came back with a set sheet with tick boxes saying are they organised, are they reliable, are they technically sound or are they...? That made it so much easier 'cause it broke it all down and when you actually did come to write your comments you just referred back and wrote maybe a sentence or two on each of the criteria you'd given us, so there was no way that anyone could really sit there and say they were just awful 'cause they didn't turn up, you actually had to prove, write something down that would prove what you've just put in the boxes, so it made it so much easier in that sense.

**Student A:** Just gave you a lot of direction. Before, I mean we had quite a lot of work on at that time and having the peer assessment put on top of that as well, I felt, myself, I put it to the side, it wasn't a major thing for me to do, I wanted to do my essays first and foremost and I thought I would it have kind of not given a factual representation of what they actually did that year, but with the tick boxes and so forth and the short comments I think it was a lot more... it directed me in what I needed to put down basically, so it was a lot easier, a lot easier. And it gave me, I don't know it just gave me more direction and I could be more, basically give a true representation of what they did this year.

*Interviewer:* I'm going to say a little phrase now which students often come up with, "Oh Jo, Oh Jo is crap you know, he's never there, blah...". From an academic point of view it seems to be a lot of it is about effort, so what you're looking for when you assess each other is it's all about effort, to what extent?

**Student B:** When I did mine, I mean in my group there's one particular person who is quite possibly the most laid back person I've ever met who

is always late, and would hardly ever turn up, but when it came to sort of the technical side of it he was just like the best person in our group to have that done, so whenever you had a sound problem you turn to them, whenever you had a camera problem you turned to them, and you know they'd be able to do it for you, so I think it's like a mixture of the two. You can say oh they're awful and they don't make much effort, but at the same time, most of our productions were carried by them sometimes when we had like the technical problems, when it came to editing and things, so you kind of start to rely on certain people, even if they don't make that much effort, you still rely on them for certain things.

Student A: There is quite a good standard across the board anyway here with technical skills and so forth, but at the end of the day I would prefer someone who was more reliable. I mean we had people in our group that weren't overly reliable, I mean they would show up and they'd be late and so forth, but I'd prefer someone who was there on time and you know you could trust, especially if it's your own project. At the end of the day it's neck on the line, you want people who are going to be there and turn up.

*Interviewer: In all this, you all see the brief, you're in groups, you go away, you make a piece, come back, it's marked, you get feedback and you get the mark and you're assessed and all that, that whole process... just tell us from your point of view, what is the role of the tutor?*

Student B: I think the role of the tutor's to kind of... especially at the very start of the term, because I'd personally come from a college where it was not a practical... I mean the board we did there's not practical work at all, so it was just essays the whole year through, so I came here, I'd never even touched a camera or seen an edit suite or anything like that and so from that sense the role of the tutor for me was kind of to help you sort of know what you had to do that year, know where you had to be by the end of the year. I mean you helped us a lot when we came, and go to the tutor and sort of go through our projects and lay down our plans, 'cause I've never had to organise a shoot or anything, I've never done anything like that, so it was nice to be able to go to your tutor and sit down with a plan in front of you and say well that might not work because you're timings... or this might not work, but this works well, so it helps you sort of realise what you've got to plan for and what you haven't got to plan for.

Student A: It helps you build. This year's a building process and it prepares you for next year and the following year and I think it's just kind

of like professional feedback. I mean your group can give you a certain amount of feedback, but you need pointers in certain directions in where you're going wrong and what you're doing right, and also with the marks they help you, it builds you, it builds you for next year.

*Interviewer:* You mark each other, so you're involved in peer assessment. I mean some people say well why the hell are we... why isn't the tutor just marking us as students, why are we marking each other, what the hell's the tutor doing? It's their job, they professionally know how to assess, allegedly, so what would you say to that, I mean do you agree with it or...?

Student A: I think we spend... at the end of the day you see us for maybe what six hours, maybe twelve hours a week and not even that, and we see those guys constantly, working with them all week and I think we know a lot more about them than maybe you do on that sort of level so we can give a better description of that person and their work ethics than most probably you could, so I think it is a good idea.

Student B: Yeah, I agree, I think it's a good idea to have the assessment from our point of view because we are with them all the time and we see them all the time and I know there's also the mixed feeling that sometimes maybe people think well if there are grudges in the group then a lot of people were worried that they might sort of come out in the peer assessment, people might just give them a bad mark because they don't like them, but then I think that's also the role of the tutor is that they can oversee that and think well maybe that's not true, because I think you must pick up on who's friends with who and who doesn't like you over the course of the year, so it must become apparent when you read them anyway.

Student A: You can like regulate it. I mean it's consistent, it's consistent. You can see it may be true, but if it's bitchiness I think the process... you can pick it out and distinguish which is right and which is wrong.

*Interviewer:* So you think the tutor has a role to play in peer assessment?

Student A: Most definitely.

*Interviewer:* To moderate it as you say?

Student A: Most definitely, yeah.

Student B: Yeah.

*Interviewer: Ok, there's a deadline right at the end of the project which is your submission and you may see the tutor for tutorials or something similar during pre-production mainly I suppose, do you have any intermediate deadlines when you need to complete work by a particular time or is that... do you have any deadlines like that which are imposed by the tutor or perhaps do you do it in your group? You determine your own kind of mini deadlines?*

Student B: Well it's a mixture of the both. I know this year we've had sort of Vin particularly came and said well I want to see all of the groups by a week Tuesday to make sure you've got your basic idea ready or whatever, so he sort of set quite a few mini deadlines to make sure that he'd had a tutorial with all the groups to make sure they were running smoothly and chase them up a lot if they weren't. I think within the group as well you begin to, once you start working as a group, you begin to form your own mini deadlines just to get the work done.

Student A: Yeah, you don't want to leave it till the last minute. I think it's just... when you're directing a piece as well and producing a piece you kind of hand those things out yourself, but if you have got a good crew they do it themselves. I mean if they've got roles given to them they're going to want to complete them and not leave it till the last minute.

*Interviewer: Do you find that when you're working in a group and you arrange your little meetings with all your group members, is it quite easy to set those mini deadlines for yourselves? I mean do you appoint someone who kind of takes charge, or is it normally the director, someone who says ok you do this by that date...?*

Student B: I've found that everyone works differently because this year our group sort of, there were five of us so we took it in turns to direct and we took it in turns to be the sound person and the camera person, so sometimes whoever was directing a certain piece would say right these are my meetings, this is when I want us to meet, but more often than not we just all meet weekly, normally Wednesdays, because we always finished our lectures early so we'd always just go and have coffee and talk about what we were doing and things. So it works both ways I think.

Student A: We were quite lucky this year because everyone was really assertive, everyone wanted to get a good grade for the year and we

did have one member of the group who was very efficient in organising in the group, it was like a kind of motherly figure who would get everything sorted, but I mean again, we wanted to get these productions and keep them airtight and everyone really jumped on it early, which I mean some other groups fell short of that but it's just our group, it was just something we felt we needed to do, so we were always setting ourselves targets and getting things done as quick as possible.

*Interviewer:* *Have you worked in groups before?*

Student A: I did, we did one production for my A Levels, but it was nothing to this standard, it was kind of maybe three or four of us in a group and it was so organised, it was really organised by the tutor, you know do this, do this, this time you've got to do this and it wasn't really left to our own devices, so it wasn't the same sort of feeling there.

Student B: I mean I've never, like I said before I've come here I've never worked and like done practical work, so I've only ever had sort of, been in academic groups like Geography A Level having to do group projects and things, which I've found is pretty much the same, everyone kind of... there's one person normally in the group who really wants to get... that your roles kind of just gradually fit in. Like one person will suddenly say right we have to meet this time, we have to get this done by this point, other people sort of say well you know, right well I'll organise and make sure we've got drinks and stuff, so people take different roles in a group. But I've never worked in a practical sense like this before where you have to make sure you've got things booked and stuff like that, but there's always one person in the group who makes sure that everything is done normally.

*Interviewer:* *Do you think you were, at the beginning of the year, was the peer assessment explained to you at the beginning of the year or was it just brought up at the end?*

Student A: I knew someone who came to the university before and I knew that we would have to do that, but I felt it was left until the end of the year. Maybe it was, I mean I wasn't that aware of it until it came along and we were told we had to do it maybe a week or so before we actually did it, so no.

Student B: Yeah, similar here. When I first got here I wasn't aware we had to do a peer assessment and I think it may have been mentioned a few times but no one really took it on board because you've got so

many essays and projects you don't really think about it until a few weeks before the deadline when it was properly mentioned. I mean there was a lot of worry about it then but then people were much more relieved when the new form came out, we actually had to do the tick boxes and a short comment as opposed to having to write just a statement about someone because no one knew what to write or how to structure it because no one's done, I mean I've never done anything like that before, so a lot of people were worried about how to write it and how formal they needed to sound. But when the new form came out I think it eased a lot of worries because it was quite self explanatory what you had to do, and everyone had to do the same thing really. So it was much simpler that way.

*Interviewer: Ok, so what about group working skills because particularly if you haven't worked in a group before do you find it quite... is it a very different way of working, how to sometimes take the lead, sometimes someone else says you need to do this and that kind of psychology working in a group, was it taught at all or did you just pick it up and is that right or wrong?*

Student B: I think the way it happened was quite nice because it wasn't ever taught. I don't think you can teach how to work in a group, because every group's different. I know in our group there was a lot of clashes at the start of the year because there was maybe three people who were all very self opinionated and obviously had the director role in it, and there was one person who just shrunk back but had a lot of good ideas but wouldn't air them in front of the group because they were worried that maybe other people would just stamp them out completely, so it was quite hard at the start of the year with our group, we had a lot of trouble, but then sort of gradually everybody just starts to take their place and people realise they have to... I mean I at the start found it quite hard to back off of things when I thought something was going horribly wrong, I really wanted to step in there and say this is awful, let's just start again, you know, do something different, but when you're not directing I think you have to just suddenly... I had to just zip up and shrink back from it, which I found really hard at the start but I'm used to it now.

Student A: I was quite lucky, our group kind of got our roles sorted at the start, we were fine and all kind of knew... like when someone directed it we just let them, it was their baby, we let them do all of it and just do as they basically wanted us to and then 'cause we'll all get our chance to do that, and I think it's just your life skills at the end of the day... it is, it's like life, you've always got a boss...



you need to just know how to act within that unit. You need role players really.

*Interviewer:* *Alright, so there's two way you can work in a group. There's a collaborative way where you all kind of pitch in and just do everything, and there's a hierarchic kind of industry practice way where you do adopt specific roles and there's a director on top and other people underneath, so there's two different ways of working, do you just find yourselves falling into one or other of those models...?*

**Student A:** I think a turn on the production and the director... it works better when we fell into roles and we were role playing and come as a cohesive unit, but I think on some projects we did collaborate a lot more and everyone kind of chipped in on a bit of everything and I don't think those productions worked out as well, but again it's all a learning process, you need to go through those kind of things to learn, make mistakes, you know.

**Student B:** I don't know, I think one of the things that really bugged me when I first got here was everyone says you've got to work like separate roles, completely separate your roles, you're a director, you're a camera assistant, operator, this is how it'll be in the industry but then it's hard because you think well we're not in the industry and none of our group has ever done this before so no one really knows what they're doing so our group... at the start of the year we didn't really have set roles, I mean there was always the director and the person who would be on the camera, but then everyone kind of chipped in with how they thought things should be done, and that worked well at the start of the year because our whole group really hadn't done much work before, but then it got to the end of the year and everyone became quite confident in their roles and it was just you got stuck in that role, like I was always the person who had to book everything and make sure everything was organised and make sure the transport was there and even when I was trying to direct something, so I was trying to do all like the shot plans and then you'll have to organise the cameras, so everyone kind of would leave that to you and think oh it's ok because she's done it before so she'll do it again, which gets kind of annoying when you get grouped into that and then it's always the person who always edits, so the person who's always edited before just assumes they'll edit it and it gets quite... so rifts begin to form at the end of the year and people got annoyed because they'd been just branched off into that category, they'll always organise it, they'll always edit it and people wanted to swap round but because we were at the start of the year we were all quite inexperienced, we all sort of

chipped in and did everything, so our group had quite a few problems sorting out roles and things.

*Interviewer:* *Would it help if the tutor had more of a pro active approach in terms of meeting with that group at the beginning of the project and say ok who's going to do what this time, to make sure that people had got the different roles to what they did last time. Would that help or not?*

Student B: I would disagree, I don't think so. I think different groups are different. You're very lucky, you had a very assertive group, you had certain people who were very good at editing, very good at organising, whereas our group just... there were four people who every time wanted to direct and even if they weren't directing they'd be up there saying no this is wrong, do this, this is wrong, do this, so it just wore you out, productions would wear you out, so I think even with our... it's personalities, there are a few personality clashes, so I think even if a tutor sat down with us and said you're directing, you're doing sound, don't even go near the director, it wouldn't have worked because it would... I don't think they would have changed even if it was their role and the tutor had said don't do this.

Student A: I think it would have just brought for you more bitterness. I think I would have just tore the group apart basically.

Student B: Yeah.

Student A: I mean it could work in some situations but I don't know, I don't think it's an approach I would take really.

*Interviewer:* *But is that what you would pick out in your peer assessment, when you'd write people's comments and when you mark them, when you say Jo always grabbed the directing role...*

Student A: I think I did it in some of mine I think, because I did have a person who was overpowering, always editing and I felt really... 'cause that's something I wanted to do and I felt really restricted the whole year. Like before I'd say I'm going to edit this piece and when I go to get the tapes to actually edit it, it's been half done and it did really get on my nerves and I felt it needed to explained 'cause if my skills get questioned in the second year, why can't you do this, why can't you do that, I needed to explain that. You know, I'm not trying to pass the buck, I'm just trying to explain why I'm not to scratch with my editing and so forth, but I think that with the peer assessments it gave... if I just had a sheet to

write 50 words I would have most probably just went off on one and wrote 50 words all about kind of... but the peer assessment sheet gave you directions 'cause it kind of said what do you think on their skill level and stuff and it made you think a little bit more about what you were going to write rather than just write down 50 words of pure bitchiness really.

*Interviewer: The feedback thing is something which will come in next year, it's the next stage of improving it basically. Ok, and your own experiences of group work then, what problems have you encountered and how were they dealt with?*

Student A: I've encountered lots of problems with group work. It's really hard because our group socially get on absolutely fine bar maybe one person, who I think quite a few problem have a problem with just because of their attitude, but we all get on fine, we all go out together. I'm living with one of them next year, it's absolutely fine and then the moment we come together as a group, I don't quite know what it is, we just clash completely because there's like I say, a couple of people who are very strong headed and they want to direct every time. If they're not directing then they won't have a part in it, they'll sit in the corner sort of winging for the rest of the production, so you have to kind of mother them along and be like really feed their egos and it gets very tiring. I mean I almost started to dread production at the end of the year because it'd just be like Oh God, six hours of sitting there and by the end it's bickering and I want to do this, well I want to... and there's a few people who just won't back down, like I've got used to now just if people are arguing I'll just leave them to argue, I won't get involved in it, whereas, if I don't agree with someone I'll just, to get on with the production and to make it work, because you've obviously got limitations on time and resources, you just have to back down sometimes, but a lot of people in our group wouldn't do that and then there was another member of the group who would just... had brilliant ideas, like really brilliant ideas and was the best person to organise anything, but I don't think she directed once and it was normally more often than not her idea that we were doing but she wouldn't ever want to direct it because she thought the other people in the group were very sort of strong headed and very opinionated and would bash her down each time, even though we were directing her ideas, she wouldn't want to do them, she'd just be sort of pushed into organising it because she was very good at organising, so we had a lot of problems just because personalities I think just clashed very badly. Like I say socially we all seem to be getting on fine, it was bizarre, it was a really bizarre situation but it did wear me down by the end of the term. But then it was also

quite, because I'd never been working practically in a group like that before it was quite an experience because you just sort of think if you can put up with that you can put up with anything, so it sort of steers you for the rest of the course... you have to really be patient and learn... my tolerance has been tested so much, so it really has taught me a few things about working with people, so it has been quite useful in that sense, it's worn me down though. But it has been quite useful, yeah.

Student A: We kind of had the reverse of that. We didn't actually socialise together really, but we worked really well together. I kind of had quite a smooth ride this year with productions because everyone... I think you keep it more on a professional level. If you don't actually socialise with your group and when you go there people are a bit wary and people actually do kind of keep to their roles and stuff. But I haven't really got any complaints really about this year, only in the final part where we had one over zealous editor, but the rest of it, it kind of went really smooth and really fine. I enjoyed it.

Interviewer: *Last question. If you were now in a room with new first years about to start working in groups, what advice would you give them? Top tip from me to you.*

Student B: My top tip would be... I've got loads of them. I think you have to learn when to back down especially, that's what I found hard at the start of the year. I mean I'd come to you all the time, I'd be just so angry, I'd just come out of a production and it would just... physically you just feel worn out because all day you've just been battling against someone you're trying to get... it's not like you're on a different side or something, you're with them trying together to make a really good production, yet you just seem to all day be just at each other's throats, well I want to do it, well that's not going to work and just even though sometimes you know you're right with things like white balances, like people in our group people decided it looked really funky to experiment with that white balance and it was like no, don't... and not do sound and we were just sort of like why are you thinking that? But at the end of the day you have to sort of... we'd all just really go oh ok, that's a great idea, and then after they've got their thing out of the way, we'd go off and do what we were meant to be doing on that day, so you have to give and take... if people really want to be overpowering and like a lot of people in my group were, you can't stop them, no matter what you say and how many arguments you have, they're not going to stop being like that, it's just the way they are, so you have to kind of feed that slightly and go oh ok,

that's fine, we'll do what you want to do, but then at the same time you say but, let's do this as well... we'll do that, that's fine, it's a really good idea, but how about we do this as well? So you kind of have to find a really funny balance in between doing all the weird things you don't really need to do and what you actually have to be getting on with on that day. So my top tip is just kind of find that balance in between all the different personalities in your group, if you can find one.

Student A: You just need to be assertive and just be understanding as well and just remember it is your first year and just enjoy it and just have fun really.

[End of interview]

*Interviewer: First of all I want to ask you, this is the trickiest question. Criteria. What do you think I mean when I talk about criteria? What's criteria, any ideas? Criteria for marking.*

Student C: I think criteria are all the different levels, the different categories within which you mark and different aspects of the process that you want to give an indication of.

*Interviewer: So in terms of the peer assessment, you used a form which had some criteria at the top which had tick boxes, things like contribution to discussions, can be relied on to carry out tasks, that sort of thing, effective member of the team... that's the criteria... when you're using that form to do the peer assessment, do you understand what we mean by that form, was it quite clear to understand...?*

Student D: Yeah, I think the form was very good to understand, but to some extent it doesn't seem very fair because other members of the group are going to have different levels of marking, so it's quite subjective, so whilst I think tick box B is a good standard, someone might think that same standard's tick box A, so it's quite subjective in that sense, but it was easy to understand.

*Interviewer: What's the best way to get around that subjectivity or is it impossible?*

Student D: I suppose you could talk to members of your group to find out how they're going to mark it, but you don't really want to do that because you know you're going to be marking them, so you'd

rather just keep it to yourself really, and I don't really think there is much way of getting around it.

*Interviewer: Do you think it helps that marks are averaged out at the end, so the mark which you'd get, is made up of the mark you gave yourself and the mark that everyone else in the group gave you, it's averaged to give you your final mark, that helps to some extent do you think to get around that subjectivity?*

Student C: I think that helps to get around the subjectivity but personally I'd prefer to get a more detailed description or an individual mark so I know what each person gave me in a way, so I can get a better idea of what other people think of me. If it's an average mark it's not really telling me enough about what people thought of me I don't think, particularly. But it does get around the subjectivity.

Student D: I think finding out what people actually thought of you, that would cause another problem, because you'd know that people are going to read what has been said, and whilst that may be anonymous, it would still affect how people would mark you, so that creates another problem in itself, so I think it's better that you just get a grade really.

*Interviewer: But in terms of learning, when you don't have any feedback, is it difficult to think ok I got say 55 for the peer assessment, why didn't I get 65... that'll create more questions than answers in your mind?*

Student D: Yeah, I think maybe the marker could sum up what people generally thought of them from the group, rather than actually seeing what everyone thought of you, because that would not make it anonymous and I know from speaking to other people that... if they knew people were going to see what they wrote it would really affect what they said. So if the marker just gave a general over view of what was written about them, I think that would be quite beneficial.

*Interviewer: What about if... 'cause you're writing a paragraph on everyone else, what happens if you just got all those paragraphs, anonymous, but just put all together as one big list of feedback, would that help?*

Student C: I think it would, yeah. So long as it's anonymous, as long as you can't tell who wrote what, I think it's fine, and I think you do need that description and the details of what you've done and how you could improve to sort of better yourself next time I think.

Student D: Yeah, I suppose it's like an essay, if you get the grade for an essay, and nothing telling you what was good or bad about it, there's really no point to it, so it would be good to see what people had written.

Interviewer: *Right. When students tend to be marking each other, it comes down usually to this word effort... oh he's not pulling his weight or the guy's never here... do you think really when it comes down to it that's what you're looking for when you assess each other? Those criteria... you can break it down into different things, but when it comes down to it, are you looking for effort, people being there in attendance at meetings and so on, as the most critical factor?*

Student D: I think effort is a really important issue when you're marking other people and just generally as well. The input they may have put in may have not been as beneficial but if they've shown good effort that's much better than anything else really.

Student C: Yeah exactly, it's their commitment to it and their professionalism, particularly on this course, and I think as well, if you're just marking the standard of their work, everyone's got different standards at this stage, we haven't all had the same opportunities as Jason says, so yeah, I think it's mainly effort at this stage.

Interviewer: *So roles... you've been involved in your groups, in your small groups on a number of different projects, how did you and your group decide who would do what?*

Student D: I think at the beginning of the year that was very difficult because everyone had come into the university having their own experiences of making films or not, so everyone was on a level playing field, no one had specialised in anything in particular, no one knew what anyone else was good at and everyone wanted a piece of the pie really, so figuring it out was just a matter of whoever had the strongest voice really or the guts to say I want to do this, and that's what happened.

Student C: I think my group was a bit more fair, we chose roles out of a hat, basically chose it like that, so everyone basically got a chance to do something and most people got a chance to direct in our group as well so everyone got a fair chance.

Interviewer: *Did you find that you were keeping to roles in your groups, or did you kind of take the more collaborative approach where you all pitch in and put six hands on the camera, all try and work out the*

*sound or did you really adopt the kind of industry model where someone was a director, someone was camera and someone sound?*

Student C: We wanted to do something like that, we wanted to stick to each particular role, but I think in the end everyone ended up helping or roles would overlap and in some ways I think that was a disadvantage because people would find that their roles were being taken by someone else or they weren't getting to do what they should have been doing, so that caused some tension in the group I think.

Student D: My group slowly learnt how to deal with the roles. When we first had our first project it was very difficult, we were all putting our own input in and wanting our own input to be heard. As we went on we realised that that wasn't really working so we knew that we had to stick to our own roles mainly. Obviously we'd put our own say into what we were doing, but we stuck to our own roles a lot more as the year progressed as we realised that that's what you need to do and as long as you fulfil your own role the best you can, then that's your job done rather than looking at the whole piece of work being done. I think it would have helped if each role was marked, each aspect like editing, sound, camera work, because then you could feel like if you do your own role well then that's where it matters in that sense, but because it was one big group mark you feel like you want the whole project to do well, which is natural, but that's when interference can happen, because you think that camera angle's not good, so you tell the camera person that I'll do that instead, but if you're sound and you know you're doing sound well then you can just stick to that and you know you'll get your own mark for how it's handled.

Interviewer: *Ok, the reason why it doesn't happen and maybe you can disagree with me, but because you have someone as the director, I mean I might be saying to Ken I really need to use a big wide shot here and then poor old Jon has got to keep his microphone quite fair away, not through any problem of his own, so the sound recording might be quite poor so I'd mark him down but it's not his fault, but that's very difficult to tick like the lighting when I say orange gel maybe but he wants to do a blue gel, and maybe the blue gel's the better choice but again he's marked down for... so that's the kind of reason why, but some places do do that you see, that's why there's such a variation of how things are done, even at third year level.*



Student D: Yeah, I can understand why that's done, I think it's just the beginning of the year you feel like you're going to be judged as a whole group, but as the year goes on you realise that's not the case and you do just stick to your own role, even though you're not going to be specifically marked for that, but you do learn to just handle that.

*Interviewer: So just describe your own experiences of working in groups then, what good have you learnt from doing it or what bad experiences have you had?*

Student C: Obviously the importance of working as a team, everyone having an equal opportunity to do what you want to do, but I generally found it a good experience, learning what my strengths are, what other people's are and how that relates to one another. We have had problems in our group though because you'll always have some group members that are stronger than others and that can cause friction and tensions. Some group members aren't as committed as others or don't seem to be pulling their weight as much and again that can cause problems, so it's a really good experience, it's taught me a lot.

*Interviewer: So how in a group did you try to deal with people like that?*

Student D: We'd often have... if we were having a group meeting we'd obviously get round the table and discuss it and bring up problems that we thought we had in the fairest way that we possibly could. Obviously we couldn't have an argument with someone and accuse them of everything that's gone wrong, so we try and do it as fairly as possible, but the peer assessment was also a good way of indicating what went wrong in the group, not to one another necessarily, but to other people.

*Interviewer: Do you think that if you had done maybe a very informal version of that peer assessment sheet, like a midway point, as well as just at the very end, it would have also have helped because at that point, half way through, people still kind of use that feedback to do better, as opposed to at the end where well, at the end they can't do anything about it now?*

Student C: Yeah, I definitely think a peer assessment half way through would have been a good idea. It would have given everyone the opportunity to see what their weaknesses were and then improve on them and then by the end of the year you could see what your weaknesses still were and then improve on those, so that would definitely be of benefit.

Student D: In relation to working with groups I've learnt a huge amount this year. At A Level we were just put into groups and we had equal roles. Coming here I initially found it difficult to stick to a certain role because I'd never had that before, I didn't understand why that was going on, but I've learnt a huge amount from working in the group as to how roles are assigned and how you keep to that role, but in my group we didn't have any particularly large problems. We encountered problems as you normally do but we didn't have any huge arguments or anything like that. So the group experience has been really good.

*Interviewer: Ok, I saw you nodding just now... do you think having a kind of mid way point kind of like this could be formative, so it's not summative, not at the end, it's just forming opinions, like helping you to learn while you're still doing it, would that be a good idea?*

Student D: Yeah, a peer assessment half way through the year would have been very beneficial, you'd have been able to learn from your mistakes and you've been appraised for your good points, and also I think the peer assessment at the end of the year, having just done a drama project, a lot of people mark their peer assessment on that project rather than the whole way through the year, so had there been a mid way point, you'd have been able to have it more generalised through the whole year, rather than based on one project. I know a lot of people did try to keep it to the whole year, I know I tried and numerous others did, but I think in the back of your mind, the most recent project is going to influence you a lot and I've spoken to a couple of people, and since handing in their peer assessment they've realised that it was straight after the drama project, so they kind of marked harshly or a bit too generously, and had they had their time again they'd have done it more fairly over the whole year, but they were hugely affected by the project that had just happened.

*Interviewer: Finally one top tip to give any new first years coming in who are about to start working in groups?*

Student D: For anyone who's going to be working in groups for the first year, I would say don't worry about your mark too much, just have fun, do what you're doing and just it's all a good experience and at the end of it you'll realise that you've learnt a lot, as long as you just keep it fun and don't worry about it too much.

Student C: I'd probably say that you shouldn't really allow problems in your group to build up, 'cause that will affect your work, so basically

any problems you have, make sure you air them with the group in a fair way, but enjoy it as well, I think that's a good thing to do.