

acknowledgements

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<http://www.gwamp.bournemouth.ac.uk>

foreword

Group work is a key skill that is crucial for a graduate to possess, yet difficult to learn, measure and assess within Higher Education. Media Production is an activity that is collaborative by its very nature, and degree programmes need to develop an effective group work strategy. This requires a rigorous approach to forming, supporting and assessing groups, while at the same time being able to deal with assessment issues and moderation. Course teams experiment with and make adjustments to their group work strategy in the light of their experiences, in a reflective cycle. There is not a single correct approach to group work – each strategy is adapted to suit different learning outcomes and student needs.

The GWAMP project (Group Work and Assessment in Media Production) was funded under the third phase of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning in 2000 as a developmental, dissemination project. It was tasked with finding and disseminating good practice throughout the sector. This Resource Pack has been designed to encapsulate the key outcomes of that project. There are papers written by project staff, including an analysis of the project, a collection of teaching materials ready for use by course teams, and a learning and teaching DVD that contrasts and compares approaches to group work and assessment. The Resource Pack, like the GWAMP project, has an emphasis on Media Production although many of the issues are generic.

This Resource Pack is a collection of teaching materials, views and opinions, research and good practice that will encourage further reflection and dissemination, to ensure we give students the best group working experience possible during their period of Higher Education.

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organisation of the resource pack

The Resource Pack is divided into three parts, A, B and C.

part A papers

A collection of papers written by the project team and other contributors. These papers examine in detail some of the key areas and issues relating to group work and assessment, with an emphasis on media production. Each of the papers outlines key principles along with a discussion on the practical application of relevant theory and practice. Each has a list of references for further reading. Each paper is also accompanied by key questions phrased as 'discussion points' designed to encourage academic readers to reflect on their own approaches to the content.

part B teaching materials

In putting together a Resource Pack it seemed prudent to include some resources that have been collected during the project's duration. This part comprises eight example resources that are presented to allow easy photocopying for use in group work. The examples are grouped around the following themes: group formation, supporting groups, assessing groups and student reflections on group work. Each resource is accompanied by some text explaining the context of its use.

part C dvd resource

This Resource Pack contains a DVD that explores three different approaches to group work within media production. They are: Radio Production at Chester College, Television Production at Bournemouth University and Advertising at the University of Gloucestershire. Each approach is discussed by the tutor who leads the group work, and some students. The emphasis of the DVD is on personal views, thoughts and feelings - and it has been designed so that you can contrast and compare answers as well as watching a case study unfold in full.

To accompany the DVD there is an overview flow-chart and an account of each case study featured.



part A

papers

Project Overview Group Work and Assessment in Media Production

Forming Groups in Media Production

Supporting Groups in Media Production

Anticipating and Responding to Need Group Work and Disability in Media Production

Afterimages Reflective Practice and the Production Analysis

The Usual Suspects Overcoming Problems in Groups

Project Overview

Group Work and Assessment in Media Production

Introduction

The biggest problem for assessors of media projects produced by groups is the appropriate allocation of marks to individual members of the group. Particular concerns are the often limited identification of individual student effort, consistency of approach, and the need to verify and moderate the marks awarded.

There is already a body of literature on group assessment, but subject reviews, particularly in Communication and Media, have identified continuing problems within this subject area.

The following compounds the difficulties with the assessment of media artefacts:

1. The assessor is judging both creative and technical activity.
2. The process itself is assessed as well as the end result.
3. Much of the production and creative activity takes place unsupervised on location.
4. The structure of a media production team encompasses both an identified director / producer with ultimate responsibility as well as a team in which each student member is responsible for his/her own craft specialism.
5. The group is not normally present when the artefact is assessed.

This project's overall aim is to evaluate current practice in the assessment of group-based student work in media production and to establish the criteria for good practice. It will also aim to disseminate and embed best practice in higher education institutions through a process of debate, discussion and continuing support.

Finally, the project aims to extend its findings to other academic disciplines.

Rationale

"I teach radio production at Anglia Polytechnic University – a non-vocational course with a practical element. 40% of the final mark is for a group project. I have devised ways of trying to mark this fairly. I taught for 10 years in F.E. on City and Guilds and BTEC where it was all group work and have tried to refine the methods I used there. I would be extremely interested in learning about best practice, as marking group work is the only part of my job which causes me anxiety!"

"The difficulties around the effective assessment of team work have sometimes acted as a deterrent leaving students in the unenviable position of having to work alone on projects that, within the relevant media industry, would rely on teams. We now try to avoid this but are always seeking better and fairer ways of assessing group work activities."

(Taken from preliminary research.)

These comments from media lecturers are in essence the rationale for this project. Group working is an essential part of the portfolio of skills students on communications and media courses are asked to acquire. Problems with assessing group work were identified in the Subject Review for Communication and Media:

"...there are in a majority of reports, problems with assessment..."

*"...the assessors found ... a clear need for more focussed and differentiated assessment criteria ... they also identified issues relating to the assessment of group work."*¹

Specifically, problems with group assessment were identified directly in a significant number of the 59 institutional reports in the subject area.

Problems associated with the assessment of group work have been identified and discussed in previous learning and teaching research. In particular, Gibbs (1995) provides a useful overview of the problems and indicates ways of addressing them. Gibbs identifies a lag between innovative teaching methods and problems with their assessment.

Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

This project aims to identify and disseminate good practice in assessment strategies when students work collaboratively to produce media projects. By establishing the essentials for good practice in a number of institutions and then developing case studies of model working, the project worked to stimulate debate and discussion, to disseminate best practice in the assessment of collaborative media production and to support change where appropriate.

In keeping with the aims of the FDTL (Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning), the objective is to exploit the technology of the internet to disseminate the project's findings to all Higher Education institutions teaching media studies. In addition, the project will seek to develop standards for the assessment of collaborative project work, which could then have an application in other disciplines.

The objectives of the project include the following elements:

- Staff development material including case studies demonstrating good practice in video format and on the website;
- A number of seminars to be delivered at various institutions;
- Database of good practice on the website;
- Articles in appropriate journals;
- Support for change through an advice and support line and institutional visits;
- Two conferences: the first to stimulate debate in the media subject area prior to the seminar programme, the second to bring the dissemination process to an end at the close of the project, and to open up debate in other academic disciplines;

Overview of Project

A project Management Committee has managed the project. Bournemouth University is the Host Institution in the project. Bournemouth has provided project management and senior academic support including administrative support and facilities, the development and maintenance of a website and the production of final dissemination materials, including hosting a final conference in September 2003.

¹Subject Overview Report, Communication and Media, paragraph 22

Bournemouth University, the University of Gloucestershire and Liverpool John Moores University (Collaborative institutions) have identified good practice in the assessment of group work and have disseminated through conferences and a number of seminars. London Guildhall University has evaluated the project.

The project has been conducted over a period of three years, and consisted of five stages:

- a. Phase One – The identification of good practice and development strategy for designing workshop materials;
- b. Phase Two – The production of seminar materials, the creation of a website and other dissemination materials;
- c. Phase Three – Hosting a conference to stimulate debate around the subject of group assessment, followed by the delivery of seminars for disseminating best practice;
- d. Phase Four – The support for change in assessment practices within institutions and production of learning resources;
- e. Phase Five – The Group Working Assessment Conference, a progression from the first conference in phase three, to disseminate the project's findings to other subject areas.

Dissemination

Activities and materials central to the project's dissemination strategy include:

- a. Six video case studies
- b. Seminars
- c. Conference
- d. Resource Pack including academic papers
- e. Learning and Teaching DVD
- f. Website

Institutions where seminars were held include:

- University of Luton
- Southampton Institute
- London Guildhall University
- Royal Holloway University
- London College of Printing
- Yeovil College and Salisbury Colleges
- University of Westminster
- University of the West of England
- University of Central England
- University of Gloucestershire
- Thames Valley University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- University of Huddersfield
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of Central Lancashire
- Warrington Collegiate Institute
- Trinity & All Saints, Leeds
- Cleveland College of Art & Design
- Napier University, Edinburgh
- Manchester Met. University

Feedback questionnaires, designed by our External Evaluator, have been completed by individuals attending each of the seminars.

Several pieces of useful information can be extracted from these for the evaluation process.

One of the key questions in the questionnaire asked the participants if they would change an aspect of their group work and assessment strategy in view of the information and discussion in the seminar. A range of answers to this question included:

"Continuing discussion and modification" (Bournemouth University)

"...in general felt we were on the right tracks but now have more concrete detail on how to implement [group assessment] and feeling more assured about it" (Thames Valley University)

"Yes – peer assessment" (Southampton Institute)

"Yes – I will work more on teaching group working skills" (Royal Holloway University)

"... I think we need to look at the assessment procedure and process" (Yeovil College)

"...tighter statements of intention" (Sheffield Hallam University)

Many others indicated they would make changes but did not specify what they would be. It is important to note that institutional change, either on the institutional level or at unit / module level, takes time to complete.

The questionnaire feedback helped the project team to refine the seminar presentation and structure. One of the questionnaire questions asks "Is there anything you would change about the seminar?" Here are a selection of responses to that question.

"longer, and follow up strategy" (Sheffield Hallam University)

"perhaps encourage us to do more specific preparation" (Sheffield Hallam University)

"more time for discussion" (Royal Holloway University)

"hard copy of powerpoint presentation" (London Guildhall)

"summary of what had come out of previous seminars" (Liverpool John Moores University)

"less video please" (Thames Valley University)

"just more time – a whole day" (Thames Valley University)

Most of the others did not suggest any changes at all, and answered the question with a simple "no".

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Group Work and Assessment in Media Production

The request for the hard copy of the powerpoint presentation has led to this being added to the website as a project download.

There is an interesting request for follow up strategy, from Sheffield Hallam University. This is echoed by a comment made by an individual at Thames Valley University: "a good start, and I would like more backup, a constant ongoing process (follow up, conference, a website that publicises discussions and results from other workshops / institutions)". It is good to know that what these individuals have asked for is part of the project's plan. The project will provide backup, a conference and a website that deals specifically with what she requests. However, as well as providing reassurance that the project has mechanisms that are requested by the sector, it also points to perhaps a lack of knowledge about the project's timeline. An article in the ADC-LTSN, and more information about the website would have helped overcome this.

On a final note, almost all the questionnaires rated the seminar presentation, and the seminar discussion and debate as consistently "above average" and "excellent". This is a very positive reflection on the quality of seminars undertaken so far.

Through interpreting statistics from the project's website it is possible to make some evaluative comments on the usefulness and activity of the site. The website first went online in October 2000 and existed as a one-page document that indicated the project title and the organisations involved. At this time the website received 14 hits, the majority from Bournemouth University itself. As the website grew over the following months with more project information, the number of hits began to climb. The total number of hits the site received in (for example) April 2002 was 886. The dissemination leaflet that was distributed in December 2001 has most likely been the causal factor for the increase of site activity in this period. This is good evidence to support the use of a leaflet or some such disseminated material that helps publicise the site's presence. Without such a publicity device, the site would not have been accessed as frequently.

Through examination of these statistics, it is clear that there is a relationship between institutions where seminars are held, and website activity. Although seminars only began in April 2002, it is clear that a relationship exists. This relationship points to organisations wishing to learn more about the project, and group assessment strategies autonomously, either before or after the seminar has occurred. This leads us to believe the website will become an important element of supporting change and providing information. The website has been developed to maximise its potential as a source of information.

Amendments

Since the project's commencement in August 2000, there have been various changes regarding its content and delivery. A meeting was organised prior to the seminar dissemination strategy. This was to allow representatives from all institutions who had agreed to hold a seminar to get together and discuss key issues of group work, as a precursor to the seminars themselves. This took place in Coventry, in March 2001.

The strength of the video-based case studies that were produced led to the commissioning of a further video. This video eventually took the form of a DVD and took advantage of the capabilities of the medium to produce a learning and teaching resource that allows the user to contrast and compare different methods of group work and assessment. The DVD forms part of the Resource Pack that was produced during the final year of the project. The Resource Pack has become a key output of the project, a collection of papers and resources produced by the project team.

General Issues and Themes

Forming groups

One of the most contentious stages of group work that causes endless debate, "forming groups" can be done in different ways. The most common approaches are: random selection, student selection based on friendship groups, student selection based on skills / roles. The seminars included a debate about different approaches to this. GWAMP coordinator Judith Jones has written a paper about Forming Groups, and this can be found later in the Resource Pack.

Supporting groups

There are different ways tutors can support groups. Factors include: the length of the project, the size and number of groups. A key aspect of supporting groups is the role of formative assessment: how students receive feedback on their progress during group work and if the tutor provides 'mini assessment' points, intermediate deadlines to help keep the project on track. Staff at institutions which were involved in the seminars had different views on the process of supporting groups. GWAMP coordinator Sheila Ollin's paper about Supporting Groups can be found later in the Resource Pack.

Assessing groups

Process and Product

A defining feature of media production activity in Higher Education is the creation, by groups, of media artefacts (radio programmes, CD-ROMs, television, etc.) A balance in assessment must be made between assessing the final artefact and the process of creating that artefact. No one approach is correct, and it must be noted that during the GWAMP project, many different approaches have been found. These range from only assessing the artefact to only assessing the process. Most approaches fall somewhere in the middle with the majority opting for a 50/50 split between product and process. It is often important to assess the process as this is where individual contributions can be best defined and assessed.

Individual Contributions

There are different ways of assessing individual contributions. The only method of assessing these in a final artefact is to manage your assessment criteria to allow you to attribute marks to the individual components of the artefact for which individuals were responsible. For example, in television production, an assessment could be divided into the use of the camera, sound, editing, lighting, etc. However, this approach can cause concern since, due to the hierarchical nature of this

type of artefact production, decisions are made in a chain of command ending with the director. It would be unfair to assess the sound recordist in terms of the sound in the final artefact if decisions relating to microphone placement/sound equipment/post production sound treatment were made by the director, over-riding the wishes of the sound recordist.

Another method of assessing individual contributions is a written production analysis that details the production decisions taken and the role the individual played in the production itself. Assessment criteria need to be very carefully written for this kind of assessment to prevent individuals being assessed on their ability to structure an argument and use written language instead of their role and critical engagement in the group project. A paper "Afterimages: Reflective Practice and the Production Analysis", by Jan Johnson-Smith, is included in this Resource Pack and explores these issues in detail.

Other methods include self and peer assessment. Some institutions include a variety of assessment methods to ensure a range of student abilities and learning outcomes is measured. For example, in the Television Production degree at Bournemouth University, group work is assessed in three different ways: a shared group mark for the final artefact (50%), an individual written analysis (15%) and peer assessment (35%).

Self Assessment

This form of assessment can be a written analysis of production work. Another form consists of a student writing a statement about what they contributed towards the group work, which is then signed by their peers as a method of validation. Self assessment can also take the form of a learning log, or diary, which comments and reflects upon their contributions to group work.

Peer Assessment

This form of assessment is perhaps the most contentious, yet allows students to become more familiar with assessment practice in H.E. as well as taking ownership and responsibility in group work. It also helps set them up as life long learners, who can continue to set goals and tasks, critically assess self/peer progress, and reflect, after they leave education. Students provide a mark for their peers which can be used in summative assessment.

Group Assessment

Group assessment can take different forms: the tutor's assessment of a group, the student's assessment of their group, the student's assessment of another group.

Moderation

A typical argument against peer assessment is that it cannot be valid, fair or reliable as a form of assessment. How can students be fair assessors of each other? Where this level of responsibility has been shifted towards the students, the tutor must remain the over-riding moderator to ensure fairness. There must be clear guidelines and marking criteria, and student-ownership of the process to help ensure students take part in peer assessment effectively. There is good evidence to suggest that when

approached with consideration, students' marks for each other are similar to those a tutor would have awarded. This resource pack focuses more on the support structures that would lead to a fair assessment system. A point worth raising is the counter argument to that above, that, in a situation where the tutor is not part of the group-working process, how can any system other than peer assessment be classed as fair/valid/reliable?

Moderation involves a tutor having a final say over peer assessment marks. This 'safety net' approach helps quell tutor and student fears over unfair marking. The actual execution of the moderation is more open to debate. Vivas, group marking meetings with a tutor, and a process where students are themselves marked on their ability to provide valid marks for their peers are all methods of providing moderation.

Feedback

It is an unfortunate truth that much debate in Higher Education revolves around assessment practices, while it can be argued that learning and developing comes more from the quality of feedback provided for students. Coming from a marks intensive education background of 'A' levels means students, particularly at level 1 in Higher Education are very focused on marks, and not feedback. To compound the issue, in the creative 'art' area of media production, it is very difficult to differentiate between a '53%' piece of work, and a '54%' piece of work. While numerically-based summative assessment is important for reasons of student progression and achievement, more emphasis should be placed on feedback. Group work should be no exception. Peer assessment is of little use if all the students receive is a mark for their efforts (usually averaged from each individual's mark awarded) without any feedback. Systems for providing feedback in these instances are difficult and time consuming, however, which is another reason for the conception of the CASPAR project (Computer Assisted Self / Peer Assessment Ratings) which is discussed below. Peer assessment has the ability to provide an individual student with a huge amount of feedback from peers, which helps them learn and develop as members of a team in the media industry.

SENDA legislation

In October 2002 new legislation came into being that affects programme design and delivery across Higher Education. The SENDA act concerns accessibility to H.E. for students with disabilities. How students who have a range of disabilities can work in groups is a specific concern of this project, and there seems little research into this area. The project manager Andrew Ireland has used his own experience to produce a paper about how the SENDA act affects group working practice. The paper is included in the Resource Pack.

Criteria

The project has researched criteria that are used for assessing group projects. Here are seven criteria that are widely used:

- a. Contribution to group discussions
- b. Reliability to carry out allocated roles / tasks
- c. Possession of project management / technical skills appropriate to role
- d. The level of effectiveness of the member in the group

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- e. The level to which the member accepts and acts upon advice and criticism
- f. Punctuality and reliability
- g. Professional attitude and approach

To see how the criteria are used in practice, please see the "Peer Assessment Proforma" in Part B of this Resource Pack.

Best practice

"Best practice is good practice used appropriately"

There follows a list of factors that can help identify good practice in group work and assessment:

Extensive supporting materials

Learning and teaching strategy, unit handbook, well-written and clear project briefs, guide to self and peer assessment, marking guidelines.

Flexible approach to changes in groups

Group sizes are getting bigger and resources are more stretched. In addition, more and more students have to work outside the institution to pay their fees. This means the establishing of groups and the question of how these groups should meet and perform outside of normal hours should form an important consideration of a group assessment strategy.

Assessment criteria that reflects the intended learning outcomes

What is being assessed in the unit should be reflected in the learning outcomes. Are group working skills being learnt, or are they just being assessed? Are group working skills made explicit or implicit in the learning outcomes?

Flexibility to allow students to have part-ownership of the group work and assessment process

There is some evidence to suggest that students will respond better to group work and peer assessment in particular if they have some ownership of the nature and assessment of the project. They will understand and work with the criteria for assessment to a higher and more reliable degree if they had some part to play in the choosing of the criteria, or the choosing of roles, or the intended outcomes of the project.

Tutor and technical support of the group work process

Although with media production group work the tutor is not always able to be present, it helps the students if they have some form of formal contact with the tutor at different stages of the project. This may be individual or group tutorials, or meetings with other student groups. This contact may help to avoid or sort out problems in the group dynamic while the group work is being carried out.

Formative assessment that allows students to reflect on their participation in group work

The assessment strategy should provide students with formative feedback to allow them to reflect upon and learn from the group work process. The method of producing feedback (qualitative and quantitative) is important and should perhaps have more emphasis on the comment and less on the

mark. Formative assessment that occurs at regular stages of the group work gives students more opportunity to reflect and learn, and improve their skills.

Tutor ability to moderate peer assessment and deal proficiently with student appeals

There should be set mechanisms transparent from the beginning of the unit that outline how students can appeal against their marks and comments. This process is more beneficial if formative assessment takes place during the process and not only at the end, thus avoiding potential problems due to unrealistic expectations.

Transparency of assessment to allow students to understand the assessment process

An important reason why peer assessment is a strong tool for higher education is that it allows students to learn more about the assessment process. A transparent group assessment strategy that gives the students insight (and to an extent, control) of the brief, roles, criteria and assessment gives them a clearer understanding of what their tutors are expecting in other areas of coursework, both in groups and individually.

Future Plans

The project team is continuing the GWAMP project in a number of ways. Firstly, the website will be maintained and developed on a regular basis. The Bournemouth Media School has a growing collection of on-line resources, and the GWAMP site will become a part of that. As such, it will receive funding and staff time for future development. A specific target for the website will be the inclusion of more streaming video from the case studies, and a resource of written case studies from institutions not yet involved with the GWAMP project. The website address will remain the same.

Transferability Funding is a separate funding stream within the TQEF to allow FDTL projects to continue some of their central dissemination activities for a further one year period. The project team is bidding for this funding to allow them to organise a further group of seminars in F.E. institutions that deliver H.E. courses. If successful, this funding will begin in 2004.

The project manager has been successful in bidding for funds to produce a project that leads on from the GWAMP project. The funding stream is internal to Bournemouth University - the Learning and Teaching Development Initiative Fund (LTDIF). The project will produce over the period 2003-04 a new web-based solution to peer and self assessment, with the emphasis on feedback and reflection for the student. CASPAR (Computer Assisted Self and Peer Assessment Ratings) will be the first computer-based system of its kind to offer staff a sophisticated tool-set which allows for student self and peer assessment, feedback, monitoring and moderation. The project will be tested during the 2003-04 academic year with a final working version ready for use by July 2004. CASPAR has been designed to answer many of the concerns and problems with peer assessment that have come to light during the GWAMP project, and the interconnectivity of the projects GWAMP and CASPAR will be key to its success in terms of dissemination and embedding into practice.

Forming Groups in Media Production

Judith Jones

Judith Jones is a lecturer in Media Professional Studies and Screen Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. She worked for Granada Television for over five years and has since combined her university career with freelance production work. She is the Liverpool John Moores representative on the GWAMP project and organised a number of seminars in the north of England and Scotland as well as filming two case studies.

Group work is an integral part of any media production degree and a valuable method of teaching. This paper aims to consider how the manner in which groups are formed can influence the effectiveness of the group and the student experience.

The focus of the paper is on the different methods of group formation that have been identified as a result of the research carried out for the GWAMP (Group Working Assessment in Media Production) project. The methods are identified and their advantages and disadvantages discussed. Finally some strategies of good practice for group formation are suggested.

Within Higher Education group work is recognised as an essential part of the student curriculum and the ability to work within a team is one of most highly rated transferable skills (Harvey, Moon et al 1997). As Phil Race states in his briefing on "Self, Peer and Group Assessment" prepared for the LTSN (the Learning and Teaching Support Network) 'It is in group contexts that students can best develop and flex their interpersonal skills, leadership skills and indeed 'fellowship' skills' (Race, 2001, p16).

The central aim of the GWAMP project was to consider the assessment of collaborative work in media production, identify good practice in assessment in this area, and to support changes to assessment strategies where thought necessary by course teams. At the beginning of the project, the main problem for the assessment of media projects produced by groups was identified as the appropriate allocation of marks to individual members within each group. Further difficulties with assessment included the fact that the structure of a media production team can encompass a number of different roles, that both the process and the product are being assessed and that many of the production tasks take place on location without tutor supervision. Group work can also be affected by increasing student numbers and pressure on resources. Increasingly, students are also working in paid employment in order to finance their study and this does reduce the amount of time available for participation in group work. These are factors that need to be taken into consideration with regard to the formation of groups.

Choice of method

It was evident from the research carried out for the GWAMP project that there are a number of ways being used to form groups within Media degrees and that different methods are employed even within the same degree programme depending on a number of factors. The choice of method can depend on:

- The learning context
- The level of students (i.e. where they are in terms of their degree). For example by the mid-point of the first year and certainly by the beginning of Level Two, students are more likely to have built up both working and social relationships within their cohort. They are therefore more able to make informed judgements about with whom they would like to work. It is likely to be more difficult for students to self select when they have just begun their degree.
- Whether the students have worked together before – if they have, then one can assume they will be aware of any shortcomings in other students. If they have not worked together and it is the tutor who is more familiar with their strengths and weaknesses, then it might be more effective for the tutor to have some input into group formation.
- The type of work to be undertaken – for example whether the project demands specific skills and/or experience for specific roles.
- Size of group – this will depend on the nature of the project being undertaken.
- The experience and skills of the students (i.e. are they all at the same level or is there an unequal distribution). This raises the important question of tutor participation in the process. For example, should the tutor intervene if he/she sees a grouping of students with weak technical skills and suggest that a stronger student should be included in the group or will the fact that they are all at the same level mean that they will be forced to improve their technical skills in order to complete the project. If there is a mixture of strong and weak students, will the former tend to dominate and the weaker not be able to contribute fully.
- Gender mix – for example is the effectiveness of a group and the work it produces affected by whether it is an all male or all female group? Research carried out at the Oxford Brookes University School of Business suggested that students felt 'the 'best' groups were those of four to five with an even balance by sex, age and culture' (Ledwith, 1998, p8)
- Personality mix (for example the roles within a team as identified by Dr Meredith Belbin's research into management teams (1981).

The research carried out for the GWAMP study based on the case studies and a number of seminars held throughout the country, revealed a variety of different ways in which groups were formed in order to carry out work in media production. The formation of groups was a central theme in the questioning of students in the filming of the six case studies and provided an interesting and varied range of responses. Within the 27 seminars that were conducted throughout the country, the formation of groups was an integral part of each session and enabled tutors from each institution to share knowledge and experience. It was sometimes the case that even within the same department there was a different approach to the formation of groups.

Forming Groups in Media Production

Self-selection

Probably the most common method of group formation which was identified was that of self selection where the tutor allowed the students to select their own groups. This would generally follow detailed discussion regarding the aims and objectives of the module, the work that was being undertaken and in some cases the presentation of student ideas. One lecturer identified the process of forming groups within the module that he taught as 'pretty informal and ad hoc really. As far as possible we like the students to cluster together around a shared idea'.

A number of advantages were identified with this method. Perhaps the most significant is that it empowers students who feel they have some choice in the groups they work in. If, later in the module, problems do arise then students feel some degree of responsibility in terms of how the group was formed. A third year student interviewed felt that it was easier to be direct if you were working with students you knew 'It's easier if you're in a group with people that you know because... if they're not doing enough work, it's easier for you to say to them 'You're going to have to do something about this'. In addition if students are making active decisions about group formation then one would hope that they would think carefully what they expect from other members of the group and as a consequence would reflect more on their own input. This type of reflection is particularly important if students are involved in self-assessment, peer-assessment, or the assessment of group learning. Research has shown that once students are involved in assessment 'their motivation is enhanced and their learning is deeper' (Race, 2001, p19).

However, as a method of group formation, self selection is not without its problems. Students can form groups around a number of criteria such as friendship groups, interest in a specific idea and identification of skills. Particularly in the first year students can choose fellow members for the wrong reasons, e.g. who they are friendly with rather than thinking about the overall composition of the group. Graham Gibbs (1992) identifies this as a particular problem 'Allowing students to form their own groups results in friends getting together (and they are unlikely to form a disciplined or rigorous group who are prepared to be tough with each other)' (Gibbs, 1992, p26). This criticism was echoed by some of the students who were interviewed on this project. Following a difficult experience, one second year student advised 'Don't always go with your friends' while another admitted that 'it's a lot harder to tell one of your best friends that you're having troubles with him than it is with a complete stranger'. Another second year at the end of his production module acknowledge that 'I'd definitely try and avoid friends next time'.

Inevitably a fairly common result of self-selection is that some students become marginalized and as a result unequal groups in terms of ability are produced. As Gibbs maintains, self-selection can lead to 'groups of good students and a rump of poor students no group wants' (Gibbs, 1995, p17) with all the ensuing problems that may result. The lecturer may have to intervene in the formation process and it can lead to accusations of unfairness directed at the tutor.

However, certainly by the third year of their degree, most students have an awareness of the abilities and skills of their fellow students and consequently will have become more astute regarding selection of fellow group members. Previous difficulties within groups can prove to have been a valuable learning experience in informing students as to the qualities and skills needed to produce an effective group. One lecturer interviewed for a case study acknowledged that 'in the third year they're much more strategic and... canny about who they choose to work with they keep quite a distinct difference sometimes between that and their social life.' As a student approaches graduation, then the mark he or she achieves in a particular module takes on more significance and this feeling of ownership can also affect group formation.

One third level student identified how her strategies had changed regarding the formation of groups over the three years of her degree. In the first year the decision was based around 'who do you know, who do you get on with, who are your friends, who do you live with'. However by the final year of the degree she was much more conscious of the consequence of her choices, particularly with regard to her eventual results and by that stage she felt that 'you knew who you worked well with and who you didn't' and that was the criteria which affected her decision.

Random selection

In contrast to self selection Graham Gibbs proposes the guideline of forming groups randomly as it could more accurately reflect what happens in a work context where 'teams seldom select their own membership' (Gibbs, p26, 1992) Indeed this mode of formation was in operation in some institutions, particularly in the early part of a degree where the students did not know each other and were perhaps not sufficiently informed regarding each other's skills and interests. This can be carried out for example through the allocation of numbers or alphabetical groupings. The major advantage of this method is that it can be deemed to be more fair and can avoid the two main problems resulting from self selection, i.e. the formation of unequal groups - random selection 'will distribute stronger and weaker students more evenly' (Gibbs, 1995, p17) - and the formation of groups through ill-thought out criteria. However, a consequence of random selection can be the creation of groups that are unbalanced in terms of ability, experience, personality etc. The tutor may have little control over the balance of each group and the students do not feel that they have any input or indeed responsibility for their group's formation. It could be argued that if groups can be formed without any real thought to the process then less importance may be paid to how they function. The sense of importance attached to working effectively within groups then becomes diminished.

Tutor intervention

The research carried out during the GWAMP project also demonstrated that some tutors do intervene actively in the process of group formation and select students according to specific criteria. These can include an assessment of skills and experience, carrying out tests such as Belbin (1981) to produce a balanced group in terms of personality and consideration of the roles needed for a particular production or

project. The research carried out by Meredith Belbin and his researchers identified the patterns of behaviours that were integral to the success of teams. As a result nine team roles emerged. These are:

- action-oriented roles – Shaper, Implementer, and Completer Finisher
- people-oriented roles – Co-ordinator, Team worker and Resource Investigator
- cerebral roles – Plant, Monitor Evaluator and Specialist

The use of Belbin tests was considered successful by some lecturers in consideration of how groups can be formed to work most efficiently. By analysing their own pattern of behaviour, students were able to comprehend more effectively what their individual role would be within the group. However, it has been argued that 'Belbin's work is concerned with the performance of the group, rather than with the learning achieved by the members of the group' (Dawson, Lord & Baggott, p71, 1994)

Lecturers can also consider how students may have worked together in the past. For example, they may have worked together successfully so it would be a beneficial experience to work together again or in contrast it may have been a negative experience which should not be repeated.

One lecturer discussing a year long production module acknowledged that 'we do take quite a hands on approach as to who will work with whom'. First year work is assessed and 'then we put people together mainly in a positive way to present them with challenges for the coming year'. Lecturers are thus able to take a much more objective stance regarding how students work together and can generate the formation of groups that he/she considers to be the most productive and balanced. By avoiding groups which are formed through friendships, the students can be made aware of the type of experience they are more likely to face in the workplace. They might be working with people that they do not socialise with but who they will have to work with in order to achieve a common objective. This can prove more challenging but ultimately more rewarding.

However, if a tutor is not always able to be open about why a particular selection has been made, students can feel there is an element of manipulation within the way the groups have been formed. If they are not involved in the formation of their group and subsequently problems arise then the students are less likely to feel any responsibility and are more likely to blame the lecturer. Equally, students without input into group formation have no reason to consider in detail what is demanded by group work and what constitutes an effective group.

One tutor who was interviewed admitted that he used to intervene in the formation of groups and would decide 'who'll be good to work with whom, who'll set challenges, where there are synergies, complementary personalities, skills and so on'. However, this interventionist policy was not without its drawbacks since if there were problems within a group he would then be blamed for it – 'it was always my fault, it was never the students' fault within the group'. For this reason he now tends to let his groups self-select. Similarly Graham Gibbs argues that 'Allocating students on the basis of learning style, preferred group role or other quasi psychological grounds is difficult and unlikely to be very effective' (Gibbs, 1995, p17) despite the reasons which might be argued for it.

Applying for a specific role

Where students are following a module that calls for particular skills, then some lecturers have instituted a system of application for a particular role within a group. Roles such as producer, director, camera operator and editor are defined and their responsibilities outlined. Each student is then able to apply for a particular 'job' for which he or she feels best suited.

This method encourages students to consider carefully where their particular skills and abilities lie and within the group each member's responsibilities are clearly defined. There is therefore less possibility of a scenario where everyone wants to be the director but no one wants to be the sound assistant. If this method is formalised either through a written application or 'pitch' for a position, it can prove to be invaluable practice for when a graduate does actually apply for a job. Students feel that they are actively involved in the selection process. The groups that are formed should comprise a number of students whose skills complement rather than duplicate each other's. The method also allows for a certain degree of specialisation which might be useful later both in university and in applying for employment. For example within a GWAMP case study where students had to devise an advertising campaign, the groups mirrored the roles that would operate within the advertising industry and each member brought to the group a specialist skill such as graphic design.

However, this degree of specialisation can mean that students only take responsibility for their area and no other part of the project. The students may also find it easier to blame each other for weaknesses in the project as there is less collective responsibility. The work produced by this type of group might prove more difficult to assess if it is considered that there is a hierarchy of responsibility – i.e. should the producer and director of a film be rewarded or penalised more severely than for example the editor?

It could be argued that in an industry that increasingly calls for multi-skilling, this method of group formation prevents students from developing a wide range of skills. One lecturer who was interviewed was strongly opposed to the idea of deciding who should carry out which role in a group. He argued 'The idea of who does what, the decision making is something which is totally the domain of students – it's not something that we should be telling them what to do.'

Other factors affecting group formation

There are a number of other factors that can affect group formation. One significant consideration is the appropriate number of students within each group for the task that is to be undertaken. The availability of resources can result in larger groups being formed than might be desirable for the work to be undertaken. The cohort of students on a particular module can vary from year to year according to recruitment and the number does not always divide up neatly. This can also result in difficulties regarding assessment – for example should a group of three be assessed in the same way as a group of four?

Forming Groups in Media Production

One advertising student felt that in terms of group size 'Three is the magic number ...because there's something about four where people tend to pair off whereas with three, two people always feel the responsibility to bring the third person in.' Graham Gibbs writing in *Teaching More Students* advises that teams should be no larger than six because they are 'cumbersome and difficult to manage [and they] are also easy for lazy students to hide in.' (Gibbs, 1992, p27). Another media student admitted that 'the bigger groups didn't work as well together because it's difficult for timing and you've all got different modules' while a smaller number does allow for greater opportunities in terms of the tasks undertaken.

Much of the work in media production takes place outside timetabled hours and increasingly tutors need to take account of the work carried out by students outside of their university commitments. One lecturer now asks his students to draw up a timetable of their week in order to avoid timetable clashes and evaluate how much time a potential group will have to work together. This availability can also be influenced by factors such as part-time study, whether the student lives on campus or is commuting from home and any responsibilities he or she might have as a carer.

Another consideration is the difficulties that might arise from the increasing implementation of year-long modules. Graham Gibbs advises 'Do not leave students in the same group for too long' (Gibbs, 1992, p27) arguing that one semester on one major project is long enough and that by changing groups the work produced can be more effective. This can also avoid the perception of a weaker student repeatedly being carried by the ability of a stronger student (Gibbs, 1992, p27). This concern was echoed by one student who admitted 'it would be better if we mixed around more.' He felt that working in the same group on a year-long module restricted his knowledge of other students' skills and abilities, particularly when it came to group formation in the third year.

Conclusion

During the research carried out for the GWAMP project no single method of forming groups was identified as being more effective than another. Decisions regarding the method were taken mainly with regard to the level of students and the project that was being undertaken.

However, a common strategy highlighted for effective group formation was that of giving detailed advice and support to the students at the beginning of the module regarding the demands of group work. As Graham Gibbs advises, students should be helped to work in groups, as 'they will not find this a natural or easy thing to do', (Gibbs, 1992, p27) and value was put upon the time that is invested in the group building process. It is important that students will know what will be expected of the group before it is formed, particularly if the method of formation is self-selection. They should be encouraged to discuss what they feel are the important components of an effective group. For example one characteristic rated highly by the students who were interviewed was that of reliability. As one student observed 'it's probably better to have

five people who are going to turn up than having two brilliant workers who are only going to turn up every now and then'. Even if the Belbin tests are not carried out in a formalised way, a discussion of the nine team roles that have been identified can be a constructive way of highlighting the different responsibilities which exist within a group. Intra-group processes such as considering ground rules for behaviour and establishing what the group's goals are within the module are also invaluable components in the development of group work skills (ERAU, 1997, p2)

However information on issues such as group dynamics should not be limited to the beginning of a module or degree, rather the students' understanding of how groups operate should be 'a part of their development based on their personal experiences and experiences specifically designed into the course.' (Gregory and Thorley, p. 185, 1994) Students may also need support in learning the practical skills required to complete the task assigned to them such as 'appointing a note-taker to record decisions, or setting a time for the next meeting.' (Gibbs, 1995, p19)

Students should also be made aware of the difficulties that can arise within groups and the particular pitfalls of working with friends. As one student advised, 'Don't always go with your friends. Look at what people did last year ... and try to get in a group where everyone has the same state of mind.' One particular strategy put forward was to have specific guidelines in place when the group is formed to deal with common difficulties such as the unequal distribution of tasks within a group.

In order to make group work an effective and positive part of the curriculum, lecturers must be prepared to change the way they may have operated in more traditional modules. There must be a clear communication of the aims and objectives of group work to the students and where possible 'The acquisition of skills for managing groups needs to be an integral part of the training and development of lecturers.' (Gregory and Thorley, 1994, p184)

There was overwhelming evidence in the research that was carried out that students recognised the value of group work and see it generally as a positive learning experience. They were aware of the value to an employer of the transferable skills that can be built up through working in groups, that is the ability 'to work effectively in teams, often more than one team at once, and to be able to re-adjust roles from one project situation to another in an ever shifting work situation' (Harvey, Moon and Geall, 1997, p63). As one student acknowledged, group work is 'good practice for our future career'.

Group work can and should be an invaluable part of the student's learning experience but it needs careful preparation in order to produce effective outcomes. Group formation is only one of the factors that can contribute to a positive experience but it is a key issue that should be evaluated and reviewed according to the work that is to be undertaken by the students.

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Discussion Points

- How do you form groups in your group work?
- Compare your methods with a colleague and together write a list of pro's and con's for each method you use.

Links

- Watch the chapter "Forming groups" in the Compare Answers part of the DVD to hear three institution's methods of group forming.
- The GWAMP website contains further information on this part of the group-working process, and links to other websites that deal with the issue. Check out the website at <http://gwamp.bournemouth.ac.uk>

Supporting Groups in Media Production

Current Thinking on Groupworking /Collaborative Learning and

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Working in groups has a potential benefit to students. Gibbs argues that 'students in teams produce better products than individuals, and project work often produces more commitment and higher quality work than do conventional exams' (Gibbs, 1995, p4). Recent research in collaborative and peer learning represents working in small groups as a way to encourage students to take charge of their own learning and to become autonomous learners (Boud et al, 2001). Student-centred approaches to learning promote a model of teaching, learning and assessment which seeks to construct the student as 'active', the buzzwords being 'autonomy', 'taking control', 'empowerment' (see Boud & Walker (1998), Brown & Knight (1994), Falchikov (2001), Race (2001), etc.) If students are to be highly engaged in the work that they do, and motivated to develop themselves as more autonomous learners, able to draw support from peers and learning resources as much as from tutors, they should also be involved in the assessment process. This involvement can cover self and peer assessment but requires supportive induction, including what Gibbs (1995) terms a 'dry run'.

Brown, Race & Rust make clear that in the assessment of creative objects, the important thing is to be absolutely transparent in the brief, and to involve students in the appraisal of previously submitted work. By providing experience of assessing objects and articulating their judgements, students are 'more likely to build up a sense of what is to be achieved and what constitutes successful practice' (in Knight, ed. 1995, p78). Brown & Knight argue that we have to accept that there is 'an element of subjectivity in assessment of aesthetic product' but that 'ultimately it is the recognition of subjectivity that is important' (Brown & Knight, 1994, p76-77). They go on to suggest that in the setting of aesthetic criteria, some negotiation between tutors and learners needs to take place.

The concept of including students in the process of determining assessment criteria is not unproblematic and raises questions of ownership and control which some tutors (and students!) can find threatening. However, it would seem illogical to encourage students to self and peer assess yet deny them involvement in the setting of criteria. Boud, Cohen & Sampson (2001, p74) unambiguously endorse such involvement. They argue that 'it is only through gaining a thorough appreciation of criteria and the ability to apply these to their own work that they can become autonomous learners'. I would further argue that such involvement provides active support to students. The

clearer their understanding of how and why criteria have been specified, the more closely criteria are matched to learning outcomes, the easier it is for them to work purposefully towards those outcomes.

This links directly to a key characteristic of effective groups identified by Johnson and Johnson (1997, p17-18) Approaches to group-working which recognise the need to involve students in all aspects of the assessment process and which provide appropriate induction in these processes can help to build a good supportive framework for setting and achieving fair and realistic outcomes.

Problems and Issues for Media Production

In some subject areas, group work is a choice, informed by pedagogic beliefs or by constraints such as class sizes and resources. In most areas of media production, however, it is a necessity in order to achieve the desired product outcome and to inculcate the desired professional working practices.

To maintain credibility with employers, recruit students and enhance their employability, media production degree courses deploy industry practices such as the advertising pitch, the shoot, and the newsroom. Building this sort of highly specific group working into courses has clearly-understood benefits to the students and at no point in the GWAMP project was group-working itself questioned. Students accept its rationale:

'when you go to the advertising agency you will be in a team so we have to get used to it really' (student, Gloucestershire)

'I think it's important to learn to work in a group, 'cause when you go into the industry that's what it's going to be...' (student, Bournemouth)

However, whilst most tutors involved in the case studies and seminars supported ideas of professionalism, of 'industry-preparedness' they also felt the need explicitly to distance and distinguish their course from mere 'training', with its connotations of narrow functionalism. In addition to giving students the opportunity to acquire a significant level of technical skill and knowledge, media production tutors are concerned to develop their students' critical and aesthetic awareness and foster their creativity. The kind of support required by students working in production-oriented groups is thus a necessarily complex brew if outcomes are to match up to workplace competencies, technical mastery, creative inquiry and critical analysis. Group assessment adds a further layer of complexity. Assessing a group outcome, rather than an individual outcome is fraught with difficulties recognised by both staff and students.

Problems identified by tutors in GWAMP seminars and case studies included:

- Motivation of students: 'passengers', 'hitchhikers' and 'sleepers' relying on others to do the work
- Peer assessment, particularly in getting groups to assess each other fairly

- Impossibility of physically monitoring group activity (applied to video/TV/ radio production and some advertising/design work)
- A university system predicated on individual student's work, making group marks problematic, particularly as part of degree classification
- Appropriate weighting of process and product

Problems identified by students in the GWAMP case studies included:

- Equality of effort in the group
- Parity of opportunity for involvement within group roles
- Tutor's knowledge and understanding of what goes on in the group
- Assessing peers (both the practice itself and the fairness of it)
- Lack of shared expectations/goals

Fairness

It is clear that most of the anxieties around assessing groups are focused on fairness: equality of opportunity and effort, appropriateness of monitoring and of assessment weighting. Research by Slavin (1985) suggests that groups will perform most effectively when the students perceive that the work of all members of the group carries weight: i.e. that their own personal efforts/talents will not be able to redress the weak or unsuccessful efforts of others; that their own mark will genuinely reflect combined efforts. The statements below are indicative of the strength of feeling evoked by situations which are perceived as unfair:

'It was the same three of us that were doing everything and we just didn't think it was fair that we were doing more than twice the amount of work as they were and we were all going to come out with the same mark at the end of it.' (student, Huddersfield)

Jenny Wilson, writing on using peer learning with design students, has reported that 'students, attempting to establish themselves in a new learning environment, complained bitterly about the uneven workload, the lack of specific skills by some group members, and the non-involvement of others, which left them with a sense of inequity, unfairness and considerable discontent.....' (in Boud, et al, 2001, p101)

The unevenness of work undertaken by group members may in part be attributed to the nature of that work and the way in which it is distributed. The diversity of practice within media production in itself raises issues. It was notable in preparing and working with the GWAMP case studies that video production in particular operates within a much more tightly defined framework than do interactive media or advertising, reflecting the nature of the work and industry conventions. Roles may be allocated but there is more blurring of the line between how students interpret these roles and how important they feel such distinctions to be. A Luton Multimedia tutor's statement that

'we asked them [the students] to just run round who has done what, because one of the answers you get is that well we all did a bit of everything, which indicates that it's been a bit ad hoc'

illustrates the difficulty in precisely identifying individual input. Where the group is a tight pair, this can be even harder, although the issue of the fairness of group assessment appears less problematic. This student makes a valiant effort to articulate the point:

'In advertising, obviously you work in pairs and you get hired in pairs almost, as a copywriter and art director...and Kate and I work together so whatever mark we get we know it's a group mark and it would be hard for us to, like, segregate who did what and what happened where, because you know even though I may do stuff on the computer. Katie's, you know, doing other things and...will come up with ideas...and if Katie wasn't there I wouldn't come up with all the ideas so it's really fair that we're done in [sic] our group mark...it represents both of us and that's absolutely fine because we wouldn't have been so good without the other person.' [student, Gloucestershire]

It should be clear from this discussion of the need for group-working and group assessment to be transparently fair, just how significant is the shared group goal identified by Johnson & Johnson (1997).

One size fits all?

In supporting groups we have to acknowledge that the type and level of support required may vary from group to group. Too often, however, the issue of fairness conspires to produce a situation in which tutors (and technical support staff), feel that they should be seen to be making available the same kind of support and amount of input to all groups irrespective of size. Jaques (2000, p156-8) argues the need for the tutor to take on a much more active role in the supporting of larger groups, helping group members to 'negotiate the much more complex play of relationships'. Certainly the management of large groups can create problems in communication and focus for both the groups themselves and for the tutor and technical support staff.

Smaller groups create different problems. Where there are a large number of smaller groups within any one class, pressure on facilities and equipment can increase deadline pressures and affect the amount of support available to individual groups. Small groups can create difficulties in running formal group meetings; the closeness of the working relationship can make it hard for both the other member(s) and the tutors to challenge for fear of partnership break-up. Rather than there not being enough roles for individuals to take on, there may be too many.

Anticipating problems which can occur due to group size and addressing these openly with students within the context of induction into group-working will help self-selecting groups to make more informed choices.

Diversity of media practice

The diversity of practice in the organisation of groups noted in the discussion on concepts of 'fairness' goes beyond functional roles within a group and working practices. In some media production work,

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the project set is achievable without genuine collaboration. By this I mean that working collaboratively may be one way of achieving a product outcome, but the idea of the team is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. In some cases the whole 'product' may be a simple assemblage of constituent parts. It may be possible for the group outcomes to be significantly the work of one driven individual. Studio and location production work are cases in which, without shared input from the rest of the group, there is a real possibility of there being no completed product. In the design based subject areas this is much less likely.

For different reasons, it is crucial that the assessment process builds in rewards for group-working skills; that function is not overemphasized at the expense of group maintenance, and that product is not overemphasized at the expense of process. Using negotiated assessment criteria to include contribution to effective group work can help to assure consistency of approach and practice in media production.

Supporting groups: the tutor role

Hands-on, hands-off approaches?

Tutor support for groups is often assumed to be a self-explanatory activity, largely passive, largely benign and often very informal. In the course of the GWAMP case studies and seminars, very few tutors offered a clear definition of what support involves but a range of tutor roles were referred to:

- Advisory
- Monitoring
- Directive
- Supervisory
- Availability ('I'm there if they need me'; 'they know where to find me')
- Facilitatory

Unsurprisingly there is a high degree of congruence between the approach to collaborative/group learning outlined in the opening section of this paper and the form of tutor support favoured by pedagogic researchers and by participants in the GWAMP project. Drawing on Bruffee's (1999) work on interdependent learning. Boud, Cohen & Sampson outline an approach in which

'the teacher may set up structured activities but their specific means of achievement are left to the group...the teacher is more a facilitator, negotiating the learning and evaluation with learners and handing over control' (2001, p7).

The rationale for tutors adopting a non-interventionist approach lies both in the belief that this is how learning can take place most effectively, and in a conviction that group cohesion and progress is best achieved by the students themselves.

Boud, Cohen & Sampson (2001, p8) argue that

'If the team is to find its own equilibrium it needs freedom from interference'

Comment from the tutor in the Bournemouth case study very much endorses this approach within television production. Having addressed the unease many tutors feel about reproducing 'kind of junior school, infant school playgrounds where you're told to join the line and you can do this and you can do that' and emphasizing the need for students to 'make their own decisions', he goes on to make an important point about tutor support being related to the 'arc of the course' First year students require much more 'direct involvement in the comings and goings of their production work' but this type of support has to decrease in order to prepare students to work much more independently.

A tutor is highly likely to have to move between the differing tutor roles referred to above, not only within the course of a 3-year degree but within the course of a module. As groups will progress at different rates and with differing degrees of success, a much more directive approach may have to be taken where there are problems. Despite Laurillard's (1993, p33) warning that the danger of taking a very hands-off approach is that groups will be left 'floundering in mutually progressive ignorance', many tutors are reluctant to become too interventionist, having a faith in the power of groups to 'sort themselves out'. Boud, Cohen & Sampson suggest that

'for staff the key issue is whether to intervene when progress towards the goal is insufficient and/or personal difficulties have been disclosed, or whether to leave it to the group to rectify the situation.' (2001, p48)

Case study examples from Huddersfield and Gloucestershire suggest that the issue is less whether to intervene but how to intervene. The student quoted in the section on 'Fairness' complained about inequality of input from the group. The Huddersfield tutor

'resolved that problem by taking those who weren't putting much into the team effort and putting them together, and doing a switch around... so, two bad people from one group are now with two bad people from another group... This may seem slightly unfair on those members who weren't having any input because there are now four of them who weren't having any input, but maybe it'll shake them up and make them realise they've got to work.'

There was interesting and mixed reaction to this executive decision in the project seminars. Participants all recognized the scenario: the complaints about group breakdown and unfairness, the appeal for action to be taken but many had misgivings about the longer-term efficacy of such intervention. Yet the situation described by one of the Gloucestershire Advertising tutors in which 'we did have a team of two... who effectively fell apart... went their separate ways... and actually submitted individual work at the end of the module' raised questions about the lack of intervention and the timeframes of very intense short modules. Although the 6 week structure was used to replicate the tight deadlines of professional working practices, it was felt to inhibit the practicality of reassigning students to different groups where difficulties arose. The issue of group size discussed earlier is relevant here. Where teams of pairs are the norm, it is also much more difficult to absorb a third member should the need arise.

Both cases highlight the lack of a shared group goal and argue the importance of factoring group-working skills into the assessment criteria. If the effectiveness of the group is not assessed then, as Gibbs (1995, p17) suggests, students are likely to opt out of group meetings and tutor-led support sessions. For such assessment to be fair, however, it is surely imperative that time be given to inducting students in group-working skills at the outset of their course. The recognition of this need was made by a tutor in the Luton case study, following an earlier discussion of a student's problem in finding a place in a group:

'You can teach students about management skills and group dynamics... 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... irrespective of the content and production process'

Supportive strategies: initial input and supportive documentation

Light and Cox (2001, p121) argue that student roles in groups are frequently dependent on tutor leadership style. Where a tutor is highly directive in style, student dependency can result. They stress that, whilst the initial input to groups may have to be directive, this should not set the pattern for subsequent tutorials/class inputs. Initial input should, however, establish norms for the group in terms of structure, maintenance, and the mechanisms for handling conflict and problems for 'If ground rules are neither written nor discussed, student are likely to imagine their own'. Clearly documented ground rules support both students and staff by promoting transparency.

Tutors participating in case studies and seminars who spoke most precisely about the nature of their supportive activity raised the following strategies as key to supporting student groups:

- Documented progress meetings which all group members were expected to attend (attendance being an element of assessment)
- Learning agreements
- Regular feedback to groups
- Group tutorials with set agendas
- Interim deadlines
- Formative assessment point/points which might involve fairly low-weighted activities such as reflective journals or logs; mid-point progress reports; seminar presentation of project progress to peers and tutor
- Opportunities to revise or renegotiate details of project, subject to tutor approval

All of the above help to provide a supportive monitoring and facilitative structure for student learning. There are clear spaces and focal points for reflection and feedback. Recent research at the University of Technology, Sydney, (<http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/groupwork>) indicates that when reflective journals are taken in during the course of the module, they can prove

'very useful for monitoring the progress and dynamics of the group... lecturers report that they are able to intervene in groups having difficulties and thus avoid the escalation of conflict'

Without the provision of appropriate and thorough support materials, however, groups will certainly require much greater tutor input. Providing a good range of written supportive materials helps students to take more control of their own learning. Typically these will include:

- module/ unit information including learning outcomes, assessment details, deadlines, available technical and tutor support, contact points, schedule of meetings and tutorials
- full project or assignment brief
- detailed assessment criteria
- grade and level descriptors
- learning resources
- proformas for module evaluation and peer/self-assessment where appropriate

It is evident from the preparation of the GWAMP case studies that the amount and level of specification varies considerably across courses and institutions, although, in every case, the documentation was clear and student-friendly. Most tutors interviewed commented on the time they allocated at the start of a module to ensuring that the published aims and the assessment process were clearly understood. However, at the time of writing, only the UWE Interactive Media case study offered web-based information. This contained an excellent set of links to relevant sites and encouraged students to research widely for their projects.

It would appear to be the case that media production courses currently lag behind some other subject disciplines in exploring the use of the Web as a discussion-based teaching tool rather than simply an information and research resource. With class sizes in media production remaining relatively small in comparison to many subject areas, it would be possible to organise online group discussion fairly simply. This could usefully augment the documentation of ideas and decision-making, providing material for reflective accounts and for tutor feedback.

Peer Support

In general, students were quick to identify mutual support as a major factor in group success (usually understood in terms of a well received project). Comments from two Huddersfield students, however, illustrate common student anxieties about the reliability of peers and a certain pragmatic acceptance that group work comes with problems:

'I'd say the best way to choose a group would be to make sure you know the person well enough to know that they're going to be there. It's probably better to have five people who are going to turn up who are average workers than having two that are going to turn up every now and then but are brilliant workers.'

'I think it's good to have group work even though it's not marked as fairly as you'd like, because it takes a lot of the stress off.....when it's an individual piece it's a lot more clearer on what you're meant to be doing and you've got people to refer to rather than just struggling on your own'

Supporting Groups in Media Production

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Where peer assessment is used, students are even more prone to anxiety about the behaviour of peers. There is an indication from the case studies that some students understand the use of peer assessment more as a method for informing tutors of how groups have been functioning than one for informing their own learning processes.

'...the tutors don't get to see what other people are doing, they're not here all the time... they don't know how people work together, so it's a good way of finding out what's going on, basically.' (student, Bournemouth)

All the student comments cited above support the argument for greater student involvement in processes whose practices have been carefully explained. Where students are well supported by extensive supportive materials, a thorough preliminary input by the tutor and have had explicit training in group-working, they will be in a sound position to give support to others in their group. If the assessment process and the criteria for assessment emphasizes that working effectively together carries weight and reward, their motivation in working collaboratively will be enhanced. However, This requires them to be able to distinguish between group task role and group maintenance role. Bligh (2000, p121) claims that

'groups that spend longer on group maintenance achieve more. [and] discussion about group processes accelerate achievements on content. Why? Because groups that don't maintain themselves spend longer disagreeing'

Strategies for group maintenance and peer support include:

- failsafe mechanisms for contacting each group member
- training in handling group meetings: agenda-setting, chairing, minuting
- training in producing progress reports and effective records of discussion
- training in giving constructive feedback: videoed or taped 'crit' sessions illustrating how this is done could be a valuable learning resource for students
- clear mechanisms for how to handle group problems
- practice in using peer assessment
- shared understanding of the role of tutor and technical support

Where the support strategies used by tutors are largely informal, it is unrealistic to expect the students to understand why they themselves should operate in a more formal, more closely documented way.

Reflective Learning

Writing reflectively actually helps students understand how the learning process occurs, promotes a much more critical and analytical approach to their work, and improves their ability to weigh and assess the work of others. These skills have a particular resonance for media practitioners. Working as they must to tight deadlines, there is little opportunity in the professional world for them to make mistakes. They need to learn from their mistakes and their successes and mentally log both problem and solution.

Reflective writing is a way of helping students to support themselves. If they have the tools, they will be much less reliant on tutor feedback and also much more competent at giving constructive feedback to others. Much valuable learning is lost if ideas and a record of processes and group decision-making are not committed to paper. The comment by a student that 'I haven't been keeping a log or diary. No, I can pretty much remember how I think people have done' (student, Bournemouth) brought wry smiles and hoots every time the clip was shown, because we know only too well from our own faulty memories how quickly detail is lost. In contrast, another student felt somehow cheated of the opportunity to reflect:

'it would be good at the end of it [group work] if people did have their individual sort of inclusion, like writing an essay afterwards, explaining their point of view...' (student, Gloucestershire)

Conclusion

I have argued that support for group work has to be understood in the context of current thinking on active and collaborative learning and that the specific requirements of media production work need to be recognized, particularly the fact that group work is intrinsic to much media practice, rather than a pedagogic choice. Many of the issues raised by tutor and students with respect to group work coalesce around fears about consistency and transparency. It would seem that these anxieties can best be allayed by:

- inducting students in all aspects of assessment, including giving practice in peer assessment
- explicitly inducting students in group dynamics and group management
- providing good and extensive support materials using a variety of resources and tools including Web-CT or similar web-based learning technology
- identifying level and type of tutor and technical support on offer and ensuring clear mechanisms for addressing group problems
- embedding reflective learning within the curriculum and the assessment process
- improving documentation of group activities and staff/student contact to provide strong quality assurance trail for students, staff and QAA

The tutors participating in the GWAMP case studies and in seminars were already using a variety of strategies to support student group work successfully. Students interviewed value group work, find it highly relevant to their practice, are generally well motivated to achieve successful outcomes, and feel supported by staff. However, it would be fair to say that we hear of, not from, the weakest students, those who experienced group breakdown or failed to submit work. These students were clearly unwilling or unable to deal with the requirements of group work and group assessment. Although the identified strategies for further improving practice should be of benefit to all students involved in group work, further research into ways of supporting the weakest students would be helpful.

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Discussion Points

- How do your student groups decide how roles are allocated? To what extent do you allow the students to take ownership of the process?
- Do you want your groups to operate in an 'industrial' hierarchical group (director in charge etc.) or are decisions made collectively? Is this reflected in your assessment strategy?
- How do your students learn how to work as a group?
- What part do you play as a tutor in supporting the groups work? Discuss this with colleagues. Are all staff members who have student groups involved to the same extent?
- Are you clear about what level of group working skills you would expect from a Level 1 student, and progression expected by Level 3?

Links

- View the chapter "Supporting groups" in each of the three case studies featured on the DVD.
- The GWAMP website contains further information on this part of the group-working process, and links to other websites that deal with the issue. Check out the website at <http://www.gwamp.bournemouth.ac.uk>

Anticipating and Responding to Need

Group Work and Disability in Media Production

Andrew Ireland is a Lecturer in Media at Bournemouth University Media School. He has been involved with designing and developing media-based degree routes that include group work and group assessment. Responding to SENDA legislation he has adapted learning and teaching group work strategies to accommodate students with a range of disabilities.

On the 1st September 2002, new legislation came into being that would affect all aspects of Higher Education provision – the post-16 sections of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 (SENDA). The guiding principle behind this legislation was that students with a disability should receive full access to education and other related provision, and should have the same opportunities as non-disabled people to benefit from the provision available. The Act stipulates that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their staff have an anticipatory duty towards the requirements of disabled people and should make reasonable adjustments for those who may otherwise be disadvantaged. There are several texts available that explain the nature and detail behind this Act, and they cover a wide range of issues from admissions policy, course development, assessment and professional bodies. Yet in the challenging assessment area of group work, there is little guidance concerning the participation of disabled students. Add the complication of some of the more contentious issues such as peer assessment and students working away from campus and the problems of integrating students with disabilities can seem daunting.

During the previous academic year I adjusted my teaching, learning and assessment strategies in light of this new legislation. This adjustment was timely, as for the first time in my relatively short career as a lecturer, I had a disabled student, a wheelchair user, on one of the programmes I teach. The programme in question was an undergraduate course in Scriptwriting, and while most of the learning methods and assessment on that programme are individual, the elements I teach are based on group work, and take place in the first year of the degree. This is a module that allows the scriptwriters to experience not just writing a script, but taking it through the production process, through production management, shooting and editing. Because of the nature of video production activity, group collaboration is essential. The programme team had to consider how to ensure the disabled student, David, was going to be able to make an effective contribution.

What do we mean by a student with a disability? Students with special needs were defined by categories defined by Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities and are currently used by UCAS on their application forms. The 1993-1994 Special Initiative to Encourage Widening Participation for Students with Special Needs identifies nine separate categories of disability¹. They are:

- 1) Dyslexia
- 2) Blind/Partially sighted
- 3) Deaf/has hearing impediment
- 4) Wheelchair user/has mobility difficulties
- 5) Needs Personal care support
- 6) Has mental health difficulties
- 7) Unseen disability i.e. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma

- 8) Has multiple disabilities
- 9) A disability not listed above.

The disabled student on my Scriptwriting programme, David, is in category 8. He has cerebral palsy which means he is a wheelchair user, has little control of his hands and his speech is impeded making him sometimes difficult to understand. He has a strong personality and a keen mind, and prior to studying in Bournemouth he worked as a barrister.

In the past decade there has been a huge increase in the numbers of disabled students applying for and studying on a wide range of programmes, including part-time and post-graduate students. The single largest category of disability remains dyslexia and accordingly HEIs have developed some expertise in supporting students with dyslexia. However, there is also growth in the number of applicants with many different learning needs. Some of these disabilities are more complex than at first seem, and the above list of categories seems to over-simplify the issue. Some disabilities are invisible from first impressions and this invisibility often hides the true degree of severity and also the ramifications such a disability will have on the learning methods the student can engage with.

The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is the first step in the support available for students with a disability:

Many disabled students are currently in receipt of the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) but many do not pursue, or have not been eligible for funding, e.g., nurses on diploma courses, international students and students on some part-time courses. There is often an assumption that these allowances and the support provided by disability services offer parity of provision between disabled students and their non-disabled peers. There is an inference that there is no requirement, therefore, to examine current teaching practice and the concomitant learning experience. Student feedback belies this notion.²

The SENDA Act 2001 defines an anticipatory role for educators. Departments are therefore required to provide accessible teaching and learning, and a range of assessment methods that will enable disabled students to realise their potential. It is essential to maintain the framework of a 'level playing field', to counteract the fears expressed by some academics about, for example, compensatory marking. Students with disabilities such as dyslexia are often granted additional flexibility in assessment. Compensatory marking can be defined as assessing the content and presentation separately so a students' thoughts are marked independently from their ability to communicate ideas on the page. Debates regarding compensatory marking are commonplace due to the relatively large number of students with dyslexia.

SENDA requires that responsible bodies should not wait until a disabled person applies before thinking about what 'reasonable adjustments' they need to make. HEIs should be constantly anticipating requirements and considering the adjustments they could be making to the curriculum and assessment strategies. However, the Act goes on to

¹Access to Higher Education: Students with Special Needs, (HEFCE Publications), 1995, p7.

²SENDA Compliance in Higher Education, (HEFCE Publications), 2002, p8.

indicate that it does not require an institution to do anything that would prevent it from maintaining academic standards in any given programme. There will always be occasions, and media production is no exception, where there is a limit to what adjustments can be made without altering the philosophy of the programme. The use of group work is one such area where it is difficult to find an alternative format which carries the same learning outcomes. There are some kinds of disability for which it would be very difficult to make adjustments. For example, a blind student may be unable to follow a programme in directing television production. Likewise, a profoundly deaf student may be unsuitable for a programme in radio. (There is also the point that people with such a disability may be unlikely to find employment in these areas after finishing the degree). However, these are extreme examples and there are many ways of adjusting learning and teaching strategies to allow students with a wide range of disabilities to become involved. A profoundly deaf student required to give an oral presentation may be allowed to present their work using British Sign Language. A student with severe arthritis in their hands who wishes to study an art programme specialising in sculpting may use materials other than clay to create their work. A meeting with the student prior to the admissions procedure would help staff understand how they may be able to make the reasonable adjustments the student would require.

Academic staff and students can find it difficult and uncomfortable discussing aspects of a disability with the person who is disabled. This is particularly so if it is a new situation for them and they do not know many people who are disabled. Frequently the problems of engaging in the discussion comes from a confusion about the appropriate language to use. Is the person handicapped? Disabled? Impaired? Different individuals and institutions will have their own preferences but many disabled students see themselves as able people who are working with difficulties, whether they be mobility, sensory or linguistic, and which have implications for their access to the curriculum. One approach would be to ask individuals how they wished to be described, and this should happen as early on in the course as possible. It can then be seen as setting the ground rules for the relationship between the student and the staff involved. It is not unfair to assume that similar 'ground rules' are established with non-disabled students as well so students with additional learning needs should not feel singled out for special attention. Disabled students do not want conspicuous favours and sympathy from well-meaning staff. Staff should be persuaded that 'difference is normal'. I found this to be a very helpful stance to adopt – particularly when considering group work and the allocation of roles within a group. This point of view led me to consider ways in which students in groups could explore what role and responsibility they are best suited to adopt in the group work. It is worth highlighting that this approach is not only beneficial to disabled students who can play to their strengths in group work, but to all students regardless of disability. Disabled students should 'bid' for roles in group work like every other student.

There are some general guidelines for good practice that are beneficial, for the staff as well as for the student. Granting access to recording equipment allows a student with a disability to form notes of lectures and seminars. This in itself can be a contentious issue, with some

academics considering this form of recording a breach of intellectual copyright of material. Whilst this argument is outside the scope and interest of this paper, it should be noted that audio recording in these situations allows students with disability to interact with the learning process to a comparable level with able-bodied students. Lecture notes should be made available to the students before the lectures take place where possible, and presented in a suitable format (large print, coloured paper etc.) Notice boards which are used for communication with students should be at the right height for someone in a wheelchair to read. Although this seems like an obvious point, consider how many times you put a note on a board at your height while standing. Could you read it sitting down? Finally, before the course begins it is a good idea to meet with the student so you can establish how you may need to cater for any individual requirements.

In the first few weeks of the academic year teaching the Scriptwriting course I met with David to discuss any issues he had prior to the group work activities. I asked him what boundaries he perceived to exist so we could consider how to overcome them. I adopted this approach because I did not want to highlight what I thought he may have difficulty with. No one understands his limitations better than he does himself. One question he raised related to the use of technical equipment he would use for filming and editing. Without the use of his hands how might he best learn and experience video production in terms of camera work, sound recording and editing? This experiential learning is central to the learning outcomes of the module and so it would be essential to overcome this problem. SENDA compliance concurs and expects the following:

Flexible curricula give diversity for disabled students to participate and achieve. Inclusive practice and anticipatory "reasonable adjustments" should be based on formal procedures rather than on personal interests and experience³.

A number of approaches were adopted by the course team to overcome the problem. Firstly, a student was employed by the University to act as David's 'hands'. As well as recording lectures and helping him organise his notes, this helper could also handle the technical equipment under David's instruction. This approach in particular helped David to participate in video editing workshops where he could direct an edit, offering instruction and communicating his needs to his helper who then operated the keyboard and mouse on his behalf. This mentoring approach is widely reported as successful, benefiting both the disabled student and the mentor.

The second approach is more easily understood when explained in the context of our workshops. Technical skills such as camera work, sound recording and editing are taught during practical workshops facilitated by demonstrators. Traditionally, one demonstrator works with a group of six students explaining and demonstrating, for example, the use of a camera. The students then undertake practical experience with the camera, producing some work the demonstrator comments upon. Normally, in this session one camera kit is shared between the group and passed around as appropriate. For the sessions that included David, we arranged for a second camera to be available. This was used solely

³ SENDA Compliance in Higher Education, (HEFCE Publications), 2002, p12.

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by David and his helper during the session to allow him to see and express, through his helper, how he may compose shots, choose angles and record the footage he wanted. Without actually operating the equipment himself, David was able to produce filmed material. He was actively involved without impeding the progress of others in the group.

The South West Academic Network for Disability Support, in its "SENDA compliance in Higher Education" (2002), states the following in relation to facilities and equipment:

Institutions should ensure that facilities and equipment are as accessible as possible to disabled students.

Institutions should consider the requirements of disabled students in such matters as:

- The height and layout of classroom tables and laboratory benches
- Supporting access around the campus with appropriate signage and information, such as large print and Braille notices
- The design and layout of seating especially in... computer laboratories
- Ease of use of equipment in laboratories, computer and teaching rooms
- Alternative safety systems such as flashing fire alarms or vibrating pagers. (extract)⁴

Whilst the computer laboratory where the Scriptwriters edit their video projects is accessible twenty four / seven through a central booking system, the laboratory itself is far removed from the other facilities, located at the furthest corner of the campus. This was a temporary location for one year during which the Media School relocated to a newly furnished building. Nevertheless, the issue of accessibility to this facility was raised. Although it had full wheelchair access, the location of the building itself impeded access.

Room layout and access to facilities is a small part of what staff tend to associate with SENDA legislation. Buildings and facilities have to be made suitable for disabled access and Bournemouth University, like many other HEIs, is ensuring compliance. For example, there were plans to alter the layout of the Television Studio to adopt a more industrial model (the gallery control room to be situated above the studio floor, instead of alongside as currently) but this idea was not followed through because of issues of accessibility. Access to the gallery would have been from a spiral staircase from the studio floor, and that would not be a possible route for wheelchair users.

Seminars and lecture spaces also have an issue pertaining to layout that is not always evident at first. In my experience students tend to avoid sitting right at the front in lectures, yet wheelchair users have to because of difficulties in navigating elsewhere. Although this may be the most suitable location for Dictaphones and other recording devices to record the lecture content as an alternative to note-taking, it may not be the best space for the student to occupy as it may prevent full

integration with other students. In seminars this positioning problem is compounded still further, as a student with multiple sclerosis testifies:

This year I've been in much smaller groups and the layout of the room has been fundamental to my participation or lack of it. When the room layout has been chairs in rows, I've been stuck at the end of a row by the door, because the room is too narrow for me to get across to the other side in my wheelchair. Worse still when we break into small working groups I tend to get stuck with whoever I happen to be next to, which may not be who I want to be working with. The best arrangement for me is when the room is arranged into a "u" shape of tables, so that I can manoeuvre. This has the added advantage of my wheelchair becoming less obvious and I feel more comfortable with that.⁵

Having learnt from the group working seminars I held with David and his peers over the last year, I will endeavour to ensure a more accessible space in future. This particularly would benefit the processes of forming groups and group planning within the modules I teach. Anecdotally, I became aware of the issues of accessibility early on in the academic year when due to a fire strike, we had to relocate a seminar to a ground floor room. This was because in the event of a fire the lifts would be out of operation. Although on this occasion it was easy to relocate, in media production activities there are many occasions where it may not be possible to do so. The logistics of filming on location would become an important aspect of accessibility for David's group – and myself, as tutor – to grapple with.

The group working process as experienced by the students on the Scriptwriting degree at Bournemouth University can be divided into the following stages: Group formation, allocation of roles, and production. These stages are worth discussing in relation to disability issues. The extent to which a disabled student would be involved in the production relates to the role they are playing within the group work.

Of the different methods for forming groups, the method I adopted was one of random allocation. The alternatives may disadvantage a disabled student, particularly at the first year stage of the course. For example, if students were allowed to form their own groups, there would be a danger that a disabled student would not be chosen. This scenario is borne out in a case study by Jo Schofield, from the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Derby:

One of the assessment methods for this module was a group presentation involving the collection of primary research via questionnaires. I had spoken to M [a student who has cerebral palsy, confined to a wheelchair and whose speech can be difficult to understand] individually to ascertain how he felt about this form of assessment and he was very keen to take part in the group work and to be included in the actual presentation. The students were allowed to choose their own groups and M was not chosen, so I had to nominate a group to take him...⁶

⁴SENDA Compliance in Higher Education, (HEFCE Publications), 2002, p64.

⁵SENDA Compliance in Higher Education, (HEFCE Publications), 2002, p46.

⁶Herrington, Margaret and Simpson, Dawn, (2002) *Making Reasonable Adjustments with Disabled Students in Higher Education*, (University of Nottingham), p.19-20

The student featured in the above case study, although having a difficult time during that particular assessment, went on to experience good group work and developed self confidence as a result. However, the problem of not being chosen was one I wanted to avoid. This, coupled with the fact that the students did not know each other led me to select the groups at random. However, some influence was applied to ensure David's group consisted of mature students who may be relied upon to undertake a considered approach to integrating David in the group work. Interestingly, this is an approach that helped student 'M' (above) have eventually a more effective experience of group work. The principles behind this approach are also supported by the reflection of a visually impaired student undertaking a technology degree:

I had to do a group work presentation with a couple of other guys who didn't know I was partially sighted. That put them off completely so I had to go and ask to do it on my own, which I did and got a good grade. But it was a difficult situation. Generally, I try to work with mature students who are more understanding.⁷

While this supports the use of mature students, it raises several issues. First, it shows what can happen if disclosure has not taken place in a group. The more invisible disabilities can have a direct impact on group work and students with these disabilities should have this explained to them so they can make an informed choice about disclosure. Usually it is better if they disclose the nature, or at least some element of the nature of their disability to their peers. This can be facilitated by a tutor to ensure only the necessary information is imparted. It should be noted that a tutor must not disclose a student's disability to other students without their consent. A second issue is the alternative non-group based assessment that was undertaken by the partially-sighted student. This is not a possible approach to undertake in media production as all production activity is by its very nature collaborative. There is no suitable alternative without altering the very core and substance of the learning outcomes, delivery and learning and teaching strategy. Finally, and this relates to my group forming methodology, there is a conflict with the social model of student interaction. A predisposition that disabled students will work with mature students in groups more effectively than with younger students is at best, ill informed. Students should be encouraged to mix with a variety of people of different ages, backgrounds, cultures and abilities. Although David's group consisted of mature students, perhaps a more diverse (random) spread may in the long run lead to a wider social interaction, more confidence and the benefit of learning from different types of people.

Once the students are set in their groups, they must decide on roles and sharing of responsibility. This is a critical stage in group work. The tutor can play a part in allocating roles but there is a view that students respond better if they take ownership of this part of the process. Therefore, students in the Scriptwriting degree choose their own roles. The role of the tutor is to facilitate dialogue within the student groups to ensure that allocation of tasks is equitable and values the diversity of disabled students. A seminar about group working, prior to the

students allocating roles, helps ensure this. The maxim 'play to people's strengths' helps set a tone for the process to proceed fairly. In David's group, he took on the role of director which he had asked for, while other students took on the other roles of camera operator, sound recordist, production manager, writer and 'assistant director'. This last role was devised by the group as a way of helping David with working out his vision for the film and communicating to the rest of the group. David was at this point integrated successfully into the group.

However, was this role the most effective choice for him due to the lack of technical equipment a director must operate? I would argue that he could have been allocated any of the roles and carried out the work to the best of his ability (which is true of all students). The group were mature enough to understand his limitations and work around them, and could have just as easily created an 'assistant camera operator' role for example, to physically move the camera and frame-up shots on his behalf. This would have been similar to the approach adopted for the practical workshop sessions undertaken earlier in the year. Frank and open communication between the group, and also with a tutor, ensures an individual's strengths are recognised when allocating roles.

The project brief stipulated a five minute drama which contains no dialogue. This was to help the scriptwriters think about conveying narrative in ways other than dialogue, utilising the visual medium effectively. The issue of accessibility to locations for David became a logistical constraint on the group. During pre-production planning meetings, this was addressed and approached as a creative challenge, rather than an impediment. The script they developed was crafted with this issue in mind and the shoot was planned to take place in a number of locations, some on campus, some in Bournemouth itself, which David could attend. It was important to ensure David's attendance at the location shoot, and the QAA Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities recommends:

Institutions should ensure that wherever possible disabled students have access to academic and vocational placements including field trips and study abroad.

Where placements, including international placements, are a formal requirement or standard component of the programme, institutions should consider ways of ensuring that the specified learning opportunities are available to disabled students.

Where a placement is an optional but desirable element of the programme, institutions should consider making similar arrangements to support access for disabled students⁸.

Location field work of the type encountered in media production is essential. While some activities can take place on campus, working away from the campus is highly desirable as it leads to more professional and in a sense more realistic productions. It is important therefore to ensure there is a way to facilitate access for students with disabilities into these activities.

⁷ SENDA Compliance in Higher Education, (HEFCE Publications), 2002, p90.

⁸ SENDA Compliance in Higher Education, (HEFCE Publications), 2002, p54.

Anticipating and Responding to Need

Group Work and Disability in Media Production

Following guidelines and SENDA requirements has allowed David to participate in group work. Not just to participate, but to play an active part. He undertook a responsible role, and played a full part in discussions about the development of the project. Following his experience in the course he is writing a ten minute film script which he intends to direct over the summer vacation, alongside students from his own degree and the Television Production degree.

Assessment of group work normally falls under one of three headings: self assessment, group assessment and peer assessment. Self assessment at Bournemouth University usually takes the form of a written contextual analysis that details the processes and decisions the group adopted, and reflects on the success or otherwise of the finished project. Such an analysis can also discuss the role the student played in the group work. Providing that there is compensatory marking, and guidance, there is no specific problem with students who are disabled and this type of assessment. The same is also true of group assessment, where a tutor (or other students) assign a mark for the final artefact produced. However, peer assessment does impact on students with disability.

Peer assessment is seen by some academics as a controversial form of assessment because the students determine the feedback and marks for each other. Extreme care must be exercised to ensure fairness for students with disabilities. When peer assessment is used for formative and summative assessment, guidance should be given to students to ensure there is a full understanding of the potential difficulties some students may face with a range of disabilities: verbal presentation, performance, feedback, use of language etc. The tutor should have a mechanism by which s/he can moderate peer assessment to ensure non-discriminatory judgements. Guidelines for self and peer assessment should, again, be available in accessible formats.

The assessment strategy I adopted for the Scriptwriting programme is a mixture of self and group assessment. In this case, due to the limited nature of group work within their programme, peer assessment is used informally in group tutorials and seminars. Different types of assessment help students express themselves in different ways and reflect different skills.

The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) can help equip students with technology that will help them overcome their disability (see Fig. 1). In the context of media production, this technical assistance can prove very beneficial. It can make the difference between a student with a disability being able to participate, or not. Bournemouth University is currently investigating technology that will help students with a physical disability be more involved with film making. While the DSA can help students buy a computer with a specialist input device for their use, HEIs should provide as part of their IT provision specialist equipment for students to use in order to do the essential course work.

David, the student featured in this paper does not have the use of his hands, and he is a wheelchair user. In order to facilitate his integration into production work in the degree, we arranged for additional equipment for him to use. The cameras employed by the scriptwriters

have flip-out LCD screens as well as viewfinders to help compose shots. However, because of the relatively small size of the LCD screen, David found that he could not see the shots properly. Therefore we arranged for an external monitor which provided a larger picture. Additionally, we provided a dolly (castor wheels attached to the bottom of a tripod) to allow David more easily to move the camera to positions he wanted to film from.

While this approach helped ease the problems of accessibility to practical sessions and group work, technology could provide a better solution in the future. We are investigating a system whereby a min-DV camera is attached to a tripod that is remote-controlled from a laptop computer. The output from the camera is fed into the computer from which simple commands like pan, tilt and even zoom can be executed via voice control. This system is based on a tripod used to hold a telescope and responds very precisely to computer commands. While not being a complete solution to the problem, it increases the autonomy of disabled students and allows them a greater opportunity to express themselves and to learn.

Item	Price (approx)
Tripod (Tasco) + Remote Navigation System (Meade)	£300.00
Software for laptop (U-Lead)	£70.00
Extension leads	£30.00
Camcorder (JVC)	£699.90
Laptop	£1,500.00
Total	£2,599.90

Fig 1.

Example of equipment solution for wheelchair user undertaking Media Production degree

The SENDA legislation gives Higher Education an opportunity to reflect on its core activities and to seek practical solutions that will improve provision for disabled students. The changes I have adopted in my group work learning and teaching strategy are positive changes that benefit all students. Students with disabilities should be able to participate in Higher Education and most programmes can in some way be shaped to suit their needs.

An issue within Media Production is the extent to which a programme adopts an industry approach within its group work. Are we providing disabled students with opportunities that they would not have in the 'real world'? Industry is changing to embrace disabled employees, but it would be fair to say at a slower rate than the education sector. Technology is evolving to a point where it can help fill the gaps in an individual's physical capability. As outlined earlier, a physically-disabled student with little use of his hands can now operate a camera as well as direct a video shoot. Indeed, Christopher Reeve has received critical acclaim for directing films, and he has been disabled with a spinal chord injury that has left him paralysed and confined to a wheelchair since

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1995. "People who are disabled or disadvantaged in any way should not be left in the margins", Reeve is reported to have said⁹. I have made contact with a production company, "Maggie Dog Films", who are giving seminars at HEIs about "the representation of disabled people through the production of high quality films and documentaries that highlight disability issues and showcase people with disabilities". This company is run by two film makers who are disabled and they offer a service through their company to make high quality films and documentaries, specialising in highlighting disability issues. I have realised it is important to ensure you are aware of disability issues within your group work strategies so that you can help students with disabilities realise their potential.

Changing the attitudes of staff and students and challenging their perceptions of disabled students and their needs should be high on the list of priorities. The key to successful group work is adopting the attitude of playing to an individual's strengths, and conveying the attitude that 'difference is normal'. This is good advice for any group, regardless of ability.

In addition to public speaking engagements, Reeve still works in Hollywood. He made his directorial debut in 1997, directing the award-winning *In the Gloaming* for HBO. In 1999, he received a GRAMMY Award for his spoken word album, *Still Me*. That same year he also received a Screen Actors Guild Award for *Rear Window*, a remake of the Alfred Hitchcock film, in which Reeve starred. "Nothing's impossible," he said. "Take the high road, demand the best of yourself and demand the respect of people around you."¹⁰

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Discussion Points

- What is meant by "reasonable adjustments"?
- Under what circumstances might it prove impossible to accommodate a disabled student?
- What strategy do you have to ensure students with additional needs are included fairly in group work?

Links

- Read the interview transcripts to find out how staff at three institutions deal with the issues surrounding the support of students with additional needs. The transcripts can be found on the GWAMP website at <http://www.gwamp.bournemouth.ac.uk>
- The ADC-LTSN has some further information and case studies of good practice in this area. Their website address is: <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/adc-ltsn/>

Afterimages

Reflective Practice and the Production Analysis

Dr Johnson-Smith is Senior Lecturer in Film and Television Theory at Bournemouth University's Media School. She undertook HE teacher training under the Harvard Scheme as part of her MA at Clark University, and since returning to the UK in 1991 has designed several media-based degree routes and specialist film/cultural theory units.

Narrative is something with which we are all familiar, something so intrinsically intertwined with our existence that we often pay it little attention unless it is marked out for us in the form of art – a film, a book, a radio play. Yet each day, the story of our lives unfolds and retrospectively we select experiences we consider significant and recount those experiences to others or perhaps note them for ourselves in a journal or diary. As we narrate we afford ourselves and our listeners the opportunity for reflection. The re-telling or re-reading of experiences is a discursive act in a different time and space that can afford us a new and reconsidered perspective and more contextual awareness. The significance and impact of this on-going narration varies from person to person, but extrapolated and formalised, its importance and potential as an educational tool for teacher and student alike cannot be underestimated.

For many years the best of the teaching profession has prided itself upon an awareness of the benefits of reflective practice. The recent development of more intensive and consistent teacher-training at tertiary/HE level has allowed university staff to benefit from it in the same way as our colleagues in FE and formal education. I am not an educational specialist, I am simply a teacher who has benefited and seen others benefit from this practice. Certainly as a new and nervous teaching assistant some 14 years ago, I was tremendously grateful to the Clark/Harvard training scheme that first introduced me to the sort of open and reflexive approach which encourages continuous and constructive retrospection within a supportive arena of colleagues and friends.

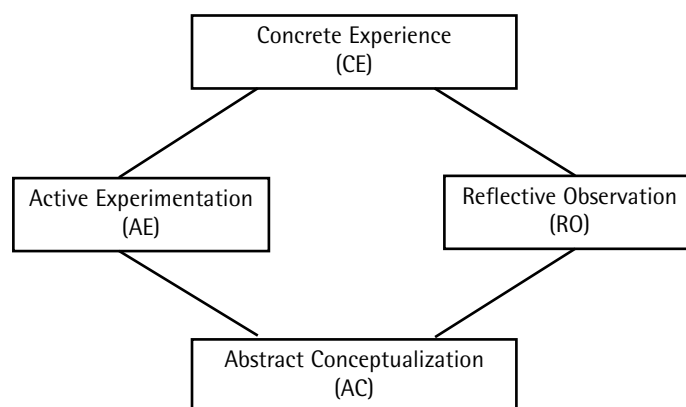
Summarising its history from the 1930s, MaryAnn Cunningham Florez observes that:

"... Reflective practice has been influenced by various philosophical and pedagogical theories. One influence is constructivism, which views learning as an active process where learners reflect upon their current and past knowledge and experiences to generate new ideas and concepts. A humanistic element of reflective practice is its concern with personal growth and its goal of liberation from values that can limit growth (Kullman, 1998). Critical pedagogy, espousing examination of underlying power bases and struggles, and American pragmatism, emphasizing active implementation, testing, and refining of ideas through experience, also shape the concepts of reflective practice, particularly in the United States" (Brookfield, 1995).¹

I would refute the suggestion that the "pragmatism" to which Cunningham Florez refers is truly peculiar to the United States. It seems

more reasonable to simply suggest that specific approaches vary according to the cultural and social context and according to the specialisms of the practitioners concerned. While across different cultural areas there will be different priorities allocated to aspects of reflection, within the same culture nursing practitioners (for example) may share some areas of reflective interest with cultural theorists and cultural theorists with artists, each group will also maintain its own discrete and subject specific aim.

David Kolb's "Learning Cycle" offers a useful model structure within which to place reflective practice, allowing us to consider what impacts upon it and how it impacts upon other aspects of learning. Kolb identifies four types of abilities or undertakings that are required in order for learning to be successful: Concrete Experience (CE); Reflective Observation (RO); Abstract Conceptualisation (AC); and Active Experimentation (AE), charting it as follows:



The Kolb Learning Cycle²

Kolb's cycle is based upon the concept of experiential learning, which considers that ideas are formed and reformed via experience. Considering teachers also as learners Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall suggest the four terms imply that:

"firstly, learners are involved fully and freely in new experiences (CE). Second, they must make/have the time and space to be able to reflect (RO) on their experience from different perspectives. It is this element in the cycle that will be strongly influenced by feedback [their stress] from others. Third, learners must be able to form and re-form, process their ideas, take ownership of them and integrate their new ideas into sound, logical theories (AC). This moves them towards the fourth point, (AE) using theories to make decisions and problem solve, test implications in new situations all of which generate material for the starting point of the next round, the concrete experience again."³

The cycle requires very different types of abilities at different times, and begs the question – can you be at two points in the cycle

¹Cunningham-Flores <http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/reflect.htm>

²David Kolb, (1984) *Experiential Learning*, (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall/Englewood Cliffs).

³Heather Fry, Steve Ketteridge and Stephanie Marshall (eds) (2000), *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (rev. ed). (London: Kogan Page Ltd.), p27.

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simultaneously? Although there are many complex and personal ingredients involved in any reflective practice, there are two fundamental elements at the heart of the process illuminated by this question, helpfully defined for us by Donald Schon as '*reflection-in-action*' and '*reflection-on-action*'.⁴ For educators, this dual approach separates the active and continual process of self-awareness whilst teaching – such as the ability to amend, alter and adjust the level or direction of a seminar discussion or lecture – from the later, more personal reflective process. This 'post-event' appraisal is the aspect of reflection with which most of us are most familiar – the discussion of a less-than successful class with a friend or colleague, probably whilst gazing forlornly into an empty wine or beer glass. But whereas the copious consumption of alcohol provides a comforting and delusory short-term clarity, Reflective practice offers a more constructive and permanent foundation, which means your poison can be reserved for pleasure and not solace! Reflective practice forms the 'thinking through' of an event after it has occurred, and the careful contemplation of potential adjustments for the future: what worked best this time, what did not work, how the process might be improved next time. Both the in-situ and post-event self-reflections permit either micro- or macro-changes to our behaviour and approach in the seminar room or lecture theatre, whether as knowledge of specific changes to be instigated on the next occasion, or simply as a determination to do 'better' next time around. It allows a separation of judgements between what we think is right and what we think is best. The result is an intense awareness of the process of teaching, at its best not just for the benefit of the teacher but also of considerable aid to the student. After all, an awareness of the process or journey involved in teaching and learning is oftentimes as important as the information imparted.

For the teachers at all levels, the practice of reflection has become a vital component of professional armour. It is valuable but, as Brown, Fry and Marshall note, it is also "much abused." As they see it, reflective practice "has gained most currency as a key part of learning from experience (Kolb, 1984)... [and] works best with engagement and proactivity on the part of the learner".⁵ Certainly it is not without its problems or danger – mastery of the process demands time and effort, and requires a considerable personal commitment. Perhaps most importantly of all, it demands a secure environment, one conducive to such absolute psychological candour. As Cunningham Flores notes, reflection is oftentimes "emotionally challenging [and] some practitioners may not be ready to confront the uncertainty about their teaching philosophies and competence that can be a part of the process."⁶

Gillie Bolton, Research Fellow at the Sheffield Institute of General Practice and Primary Care takes an almost Taoist approach when she points out the three crucial paradoxes within the heart of reflective practice:

In order to acquire confidence you have to let go of certainty.

The confident, effective practitioner is the one who is able to respond flexibly and creatively to a range of influences, needs and wants of colleagues, and unforeseeable events and forces. A practitioner who knows the right answers all the time is bound to be wrong. Writing about, and talking through, the

most vital concerns of your professional life within a trusted and trusting environment will help you to let go of the security blanket of false certainty.

Looking for something when you don't know what it is.

The strange thing about reflection on practice is that before we begin doing it we have no idea what we will be focusing on, and where the process will lead us. Once you know something about reflective practice you are able to work within this uncertainty – able to trust the process, and openly explore whatever needs exploring.

Beginning to act when you don't know how you should act.

This refers to reflection-in-, as well as to reflection-on-action. You are a skilled, experienced practitioner, and you can trust that you are. That wise, strong inner person in you knows how to do it – trust and respect that person. This is which you know how to do is both.⁷

Nevertheless, contemplation of this process by an experienced self-reflective practitioner in a supportive and flexible environment can result in not only more confident and professional teaching, but also a strong degree of empathy for student experience. With ever-increasing numbers of students and falling staff-student ratios the results can only be of assistance to all concerned.

Reflective practice is not an aspect of educational experience that should be reserved for merely teachers: it is also of immense benefit to students at all levels and can occur in a variety of guises, both pastoral and academic. Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall identified feedback as a key facet in Kolb's model, and indeed, basic forms of reflective feedback from students are common enough. In common with other Universities and Colleges of Higher Education, Bournemouth has a thorough system of formal student feedback on an annual basis by means of standardised 'tick-box' forms. These ask students to respond to specific questions about the course, and allow them to express varying degrees of satisfaction with teaching and teaching units. Bournemouth also utilises a more individually focused form of reflective feedback, offering the students an opportunity to assess their own progress within the context of a particular unit or course. For a handful of students this is little more than a list of personal likes and/or dislikes, however, once familiar with the process and what it can achieve, the vast majority of students readily offer constructive and considered criticism. Remarkably, this often takes place without a detailed explanation of reflective practice, a demonstration of how close the action is to our desire to narrate experiences to others, either orally or via diaries/journals. This simple form of reflection helps both the student and the tutor achieve a more coherent understanding of each individual's progress located within the intended learning experience.

As its very name suggests, reflection has tended to be reserved for notions of individual learning and progression, and it certainly has a most helpful role in theoretical disciplines and in pastoral care. Whereas lectures serve primarily as a means of mass teaching,

⁴Donald A. Schon, (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass).

⁵Brown, Fry and Marshall. in Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall (eds), (2000) p207.

⁶Cunningham-Flores <http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/reflect.htm>

⁷Gillie Bolton. <http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/projects/wrp/rpwrite.html>

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the seminar and the group or individual tutorial have long provided an arena for discussion and contemplation. At the simplest level, ideas articulated in lectures can be explored and further clarified, questioned and challenged within a small and secure group, or one-to-one – this in itself encourages more reflection, and an aware tutor can encourage and support the process within the class through his or her own involvement. However, there are other applications within theoretical work. At Bournemouth, we are currently considering the introduction of a new requirement to our Media Production dissertations and essays. This is mostly in order to learn more about our student's understanding of their own application of theoretical arguments, but also in the hope that it will stem the sadly rising and problematic tide of Internet plagiarism.

This new approach will require undergraduate students to submit a brief statement along with their essays explaining why they have selected a particular approach and explaining its strengths and weaknesses. This is of course part of the standard essay requirement and should in any case occur within the main body of paper itself, but the 'mini-abstract' will require the student to demonstrate an external contextual understanding of the rationale of the paper submitted. In the case of undergraduate dissertations, we already ask students to submit an optional 4000+ words (or whatever they have written so far) and a bibliography half way through their final year for detailed consideration by their tutor. In addition to this we are planning to borrow a system employed by comparable degrees at the University of Luton, where students are asked to offer a critical appraisal of their dissertation methodology mid-way through their final year. This allows not only demonstration of knowledge within the paper itself, but also a sense of the validity of approach in a broader context and its articulation should help the student and tutor recognise any latent shortcomings. It affords a sort of road map, providing a sense of destination and direction as well as a sense of place.

So much for the use for teacher and student's use of reflective practice as a pastoral and theoretical concern on an individual basis. The application of such practices need not be so limited. It can also be of great value in written papers stemming from group production work, offering both tutor and student a high degree of insight into the expectations of the student and the context of the finished production work. Students in production degrees sometimes only tolerate the theoretical aspects of their courses, feeling that they are there to "do" and not to talk. However, drawing from Kolb's cycle and, for the sake of production students, replacing the idea of "theorizing" with the word 'thinking', we can argue clearly that theory is thought-before-action, thought-in- action and thought-after-action, all of which then impact upon the thought before the next, new action. This process can be utilised as part of an open reflective process, and recorded in a piece of written work such as the Production Analysis.

Adding to the difficulty with group production work is the question of marking, never easy, no matter how carefully considered and evenly applied the criteria. Even in seminars where the apparent involvement and contributions of individuals can be carefully monitored it is not

always easy to assess the depth and breadth of each student's understanding. When students have been off on a shoot, or a team of them are involved in creative decisions upon a project, the rationale for those decisions and the awareness of their ramifications is sometimes hard to pin down. This is where the use of a Production Analysis, a critically aware piece of writing based upon the analytical consideration of a rationale for a group production project, can be of immense value.

My main teaching is film theory, and whenever I find myself wondering about how self-aware a student is about his or her work, I am reminded of Pauline Kael and Andrew Sarris' infamous spat in the 1960s about the Americanised *politique des auteurs* – the "Auteur theory". Sarris decided that he would willingly risk his critical reputation on American cinema's superiority to the rest of the world, and proposed three criteria for recognising a director-auteur: firstly, technical competence, secondly, distinguishable personality and finally, interior meaning arising from tensions between the director's personality and the material. In "Circles and Squares" Kael responded with typical acerbity to Sarris's suggestions, arguing that technical competence was scarcely a valid criterion, since some directors were beyond competence and challenged every rule and tradition of film-making – Antonioni for example. She ridiculed 'distinguishable personality' as favouring directors who are repetitious and lacking in innovation, and noted that the distinctive smell of skunks was neither pleasant nor superior to that of roses. Finally she dismissed ideas of 'interior meaning' as a hopelessly vague term which favouring style over substance.⁸ Both Kael and Sarris were in fact arguing for a problematic and self-defeating evaluative approach to film theory and criticism, but the significance of Kael's argument is that an analysis accompanying a production can answer a great many of these questions. In the case of student work, it can diffuse or clarify most concerns about contextual understanding, as well as critical and historical awareness. It also provides the ideal location for reflection.

Ideally, a Production Analysis is just such a reflective piece of academic work. Written in conjunction with a Major Project – a script, website/interactive CD-Rom or television production, for example – it forms the final, crucial linkage between the theoretical and practical elements of a degree programme. Bournemouth's three production degrees (in Interactive or New Media Production, Script-writing and Television Production) share a Production Analysis unit, each tailoring the requirements slightly to suit its own specialist area(s). The Production Analysis is essentially a contextualised analytical and self-critical researched-based commentary on the development and creation of the final project. It also functions as a key manifestation of how the theoretical and practical disciplines taught on the course are inter-linked: ideally it demonstrates how these have informed the final project. The Unit guides stress that the Production Analysis is not intended to be a diary, although parts of it might be chronological, but "rather a piece of critically engaged writing, similar in tone and style to a dissertation. It discusses the evolution of the major project from its formative beginnings to its ultimate completion within the broader historical, social, political and economic context."⁹

Historically, Bournemouth's Production Analyses have been split into two or three sections, linking the theoretical, technical/professional and production elements of the degree. New Media Students, for example, are required to provide two sections, totalling between 4000-6000 words:

Part One asks for:

- 1) an explanation of your project and why you were attracted to it in the first place
- 2) the methodology you have selected for your approach,
- 3) an awareness of your intended market,
- 4) an analysis of the traditions upon which you are drawing – this could be an explanation of who or what has influenced you – such as directors, writers, programmes, CD-ROMs, websites, etc.,
- 5) how and why you are utilising or subverting these traditions (perhaps in order to be innovative),
- 6) to what effect your understanding of these factors has shaped your project.
- 7) the development of the idea and its visualisation,
- 8) The planning and pre-production stages.

Part Two, which is completed when the project is finished, not only considers how the student completed the project, but demonstrates his/her awareness of anything which has impacted upon the work (perhaps changing it). It also clearly justifies the theoretical and practical decisions that were taken in the process of completing the project. This section is required to be more critically aware than a production diary and must go into greater depth, drawing on those theoretical and practical issues illuminated in Part One, and includes:

- 1) An impartial assessment of the production itself, its management and progression,
- 2) Consideration of aesthetic and organisational skills, including shortfalls and failures,
- 3) The creative decision making in terms of programming, video-editing, sound design, graphics etc.,
- 4) Testing – and evaluation of the work based on a user trial.

These observations are not intended to be merely descriptive, they should offer critical analyses of production processes. It is important to say how well or badly the student feels the work went, how they might have changed things with hindsight, and what they have learned from the process – how would they approach a similar venture again in the light of their experience. Students are also required to include a variety of appendices, mostly concerning technical and professional details such as budget, a teamwork report and copyright forms.

Other production students work to much the same pattern but utilise a slightly different format, requiring three elements, comprising roughly 40%/30%/30% of the document respectively. Our present Production Analysis Guide for Television Students suggests this breakdown:

A: Theoretical and Contextual Analysis

This is a discussion of relevant theoretical and professional issues related to your chosen genre/ category of work and should contain:

Discussion and analysis of related broadcast or published works and their influence upon the development of the project.

This should consist of a detailed critical overview of your video project. The inception of the idea: what initially attracted you to the concept. Why the particular programme convention was chosen (drama, documentary, or a mix of forms) and its appropriateness to the subject matter.

It should contain a theoretical analysis of your project in terms of its form or genre, in which you refer to relevant theoretical debates and issues. You should also discuss professional matters relating to your production, with reference where appropriate to your professional placement experience. For example, you may wish to refer to changes in practice as a result of new technologies, and where your programme might sit in the schedules of broadcast television or alternative delivery outlets. A discussion of influences which affected the way you made your programme should be included: for example, you should discuss work which deals with the same subject as your project as well as work which employs a similar style. Detailed analyses of broadcast or other work is required.

B: Process

An analysis of research/script development and decisions taken during production and post-production.

The development process of extending and structuring the idea, researching and scripting it. The planning and pre-production stages, with an emphasis upon the decision-making process: budget, recces, casting, selection of interviewees, organisational aspects.

The production itself: its management and progression, focusing upon an impartial assessment of your creative and organisational performance, including failures and shortfalls.

Post-production: the creative decision-making process in terms of programme structuring, editing, sound and music.

Observations should not be merely descriptive, but a critical analysis of production and post-production.

C: Product

A critique of the finished project, and its strengths and weaknesses.

It is important to state how well, or otherwise, you feel the video to have finally worked out; how differently the production might have been executed in hindsight; what was learnt from the production, especially in terms of limitations and shortfalls; and how you would approach such a venture again in the light of experience.

The Production Analysis can be written in standard essay form or separated into three headed sections. The ethos remains the same: it is a critical commentary/analysis based upon the development and production of the student's final project. It should not be confused

Afterimages

Reflective Practice and the Production Analysis

with a production diary, which is more of an informative record. The Production Analysis is an interpretative critique, going into greater analytical depth than would be possible in a production diary and is assessed using the following academic criteria:

- (a) Analytical – the student must demonstrate an understanding of theoretical issues (eg nature of the documentary style used in the programme).
- (b) Research – the student must show how the programme was researched and written – including detailed discussion of similar programmes (form and content).
- (c) Context – the student must demonstrate the ability to place their programme in the context of mainstream broadcast TV and identify any current 'professional' debates that are relevant to their own work.
- (d) Self-critical – the student must be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their own work.¹⁰

The instigation of a reflective, critical analysis alongside a student production encourages the student to consider the process of production, and to relate it through a reflective narrative to the context of other productions, past and present. Simultaneously, it can help the

tutor recognise whether the hand-held shaky camera work and jump cuts in the footage are a happy (or not so happy) accident, a piece of clumsy footage redeemed by an innovative approach and technical competence, a competent and well-contextualised piece of work, or the early flowering of the next Bresson or Kubrick. Through the Production Analysis a tutor garners a strong indication of the depth and breadth of student awareness and understanding – through the appropriate use of methodology, the appropriate socio-historical context – as well as providing an additional guide regarding the degree of technical competence within the work to which the paper refers. In turn, for the students, in association with their practical experience through the group work, those less competent in certain areas may still demonstrate an awareness of the theory and context as well as their own development within the course. As a result a student who creates a relatively weak production yet whose analysis demonstrates considerable comprehension of the process and of context may still gain a good grade for his or her understanding of what was required, and from a clear articulation of how they have learned from the process itself.

Bournemouth University BANMP Production Analysis Unit Guide for 2002-3.

Bournemouth University BATV Production Analysis Unit Guide 2002-3

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Discussion Points

- How does a Production Analysis add to the assessment of a group-working exercise?
- What are you assessing – the content of the analysis or the quality of the writing?
- How can you be sure that what you are reading is a truthful account of the group-work?

Links

- Watch the interviews on the DVD to find out how staff at three institutions deal with the issues surrounding reflective learning.

The Usual Suspects

Overcoming Problems in Groups

Inevitably, students will experience difficulties while working in groups. Across Higher Education, the same criticisms of group working and problems within groups are encountered. These problems involve groups of all sizes, ages and prior experience of working in groups. Sometimes these problems reach the point where the group can no longer function effectively and outside assistance (usually in the form of a tutor) must be brought in to rectify the situation. Upon investigation, the catalysts of these problems can usually be broken down into four character-types: "the usual suspects".

staff and student views

Following are descriptions of these "usual suspects" with some views on how staff and students can overcome the problems they cause. An interesting observation is that students tend to contain the problem in their group and only wish to involve a tutor as a last resort.

1

suspect

The one who doesn't turn up

"I always encourage students to swap contact details at the beginning of the module so even if they don't live near each other they can keep in touch. I'm now much more vigilant about contacting students who are attending either by phone or by email and embarrass them into turning up. I remind students at the beginning of the module that this is a group effort and they all have an equal responsibility in the project. But you also have to be open to the fact that there might be genuine reasons for non-attendance that the student might be hesitant about revealing." Lecturer

"I would primarily try and contact the student and let them know that they are missing vital meetings. If that doesn't work I would still inform them of what basic info has been discussed in the meeting and make a complaint." Student

"Talk to them privately and let them know that they are letting the group down and that this will be reflected in their process mark." Lecturer

"I would make contact, if that failed I would wait till I saw them next and ask for explanation. If bad response talk to tutor." Student

"Discover reasons. If reasons are good – illness, personal problems – help to solve. If not – hangover, laziness – discipline procedure." Lecturer

"Should they fail to turn up the rest of the group should get together and decide what to do. The student should ideally be contacted by a group member and made aware of the importance of turning up. Should this not be possible or if they continually fail to turn up the senior tutor / head of year should be contacted and made aware of the situation." Student

2

suspect

The one who does turn up but doesn't do anything

"Remind the students that they all need to contribute to the module and hope that the student takes the hint. Also I try to make sure that the students work in a professional manner, e.g. make notes of meetings, set targets and in this case allocate individual specific tasks. Sometimes the student who doesn't do anything might be lazy or he/she might simply be unsure as to what to do and might lack confidence." Lecturer

"If a person is not doing anything as a result of stronger members of the group, a meeting should be arranged to ensure everyone has an equal role. The situation should also be brought up in a general meeting and suggested subtly without accusing or otherwise unfairly criticising that group member and between the group the reasons for that persons lack of involvement should be ascertained. Should they continue to do nothing one group member should be responsible for informing them more directly. If necessary a senior tutor should then be contacted." Student

"Maybe try and find out why and if there is a solution, i.e. do they want to be doing any specific task or are personal problems, etc. Sometimes you'll find a student who has work commitments and can't make certain days. As a consequence you need to resolve that problem one way or another." Lecturer

"If the group was big then the person would be dispensable! So to save argument leave it! If needed ask them or just give job!" Student

"Discover reasons. Could be lack of assertiveness on students part. If laziness, well, does the student want to be on the course." Lecturer

"I would try and make sure that each person had a say and would insist on hearing this persons opinion. If this person is shy I would possibly discuss this with them on their own, out of the group." Student

The Usual Suspects

Overcoming Problems in Groups

suspect 3

The one who dominates the group and takes over

"This can certainly be the case with a student who has thought up the original film or programme idea. Once an idea has been selected the group have to be reminded that it is now a group idea and an idea of individual ownership no longer exists. If the student continues to dominate, I would have a quiet word with him/her. In group tutorials I will purposely ask the other members of the group for their opinions so that everyone gets an opportunity to speak." Lecturer

"Insist that everyone should have a say and highlight that they may be stopping others from conveying their opinion." Student

"Difficult one. It does happen. I think if you are meeting regularly with a group you begin to pick up the vibes and hopefully will be in a position to change things or have a word." Lecturer

"Be diplomatic and just turn the situation into a debate! If the person is a pain tell them!" Student

"Break into sub groups. Isolate individual. Change activities. Introduce aspects of role-play." Lecturer

"This should perhaps be brought up in group meeting with care to avoid arguments. If this group member has some of the more important roles within group work on a frequent basis, it should perhaps be suggested that other group members take these roles in future. In meetings, to avoid one person dominating a "chair person" should be elected for each meeting to moderate. Group roles ideally be selected at random to avoid unfairness." Student

suspect 4

The one who marks down who they don't like

"As we do not have peer assessment this situation does not really arise. Sometimes in the personal dossiers a student will criticize other members of his/her group. By marking all the dossiers together you can usually get a good idea of what the situation is within the group and if not, then get them in to talk to them about the situation." Lecturer

"It needs to be understood and adhered to fully by all students that the peer assessment should be marked fairly and without personality bias. It is probably best to speak to a senior tutor if a group member feels someone has marked unfairly, with the tutor responsible for speaking to the students. This is less likely to cause arguments and ensure false accusations are not flung at certain group members." Student

"Confront in tutorial. Assess reasons. Move into analysis of group working skills." Lecturer

"Obviously too immature to be at uni! But generally if you don't like someone it's because they're bad workers!" Student

"When the project is completed I talk with them about their experience. They will receive a process mark. This can be a joint mark or individual mark. I ask them which they would prefer but always emphasise that while I'm happy to take their view into consideration I have the final say on whether it's a joint mark or individual mark. If I am aware that there have been problems, such as students not pulling their weight I'll be likely to go for individual marks in order to reflect this. I also offer the students the chance to come and see me privately if they wish to say something that they do not want others to hear. But you do have to be careful because students will also winge or be ready to lay the blame elsewhere when often or not the problem lies with themselves." Lecturer



part B

teaching materials

Teaching Materials Key

- M1 Top Ten Tips for Group Work
- M2 Group Contact Details
- M3 Get to know your group
- M4 Sharing responsibility in your group
- M5 Group Meeting Report
- M6 Group Review Exercise
- M7 Individual Contribution Statement
- M8 Peer Assessment Sheet

Teaching Materials Key

This part of the Resource Pack features some examples of teaching materials that are currently employed by different H.E. institutions. They are featured here as modified versions that can easily be implemented into group working modules. Each material is denoted by a key [M1 ... M8] which relates to the text below where the context and use of each material is described.

M1: Top Ten Tips for Group Work

This first teaching material is simply a list of good practice for students working in groups to consider. It was designed and implemented in a short group work exercise where there was not time to hold a seminar on group working. Although it does not encourage the same amount of discussion and learning as M2 above, in some circumstances this is all that may be required. In any event, it can be used as a prompt for groups to consider during their group work to ensure they get the most out of the experience.

M2: Contact Details

Unless they have previous group working experience, many students find it difficult to organise meetings with their peers outside teaching hours. Group working normally involves a large amount of work by the group away from tutors and even the institution. Getting groups to complete this form soon after formation helps them see the importance of communication while at the same time ensuring they are able to communicate with each other in a number of different ways. Portioning off a part of a course notice board also helps students communicate because they can easily leave notes for each other without having to contact everyone individually. E-mail is a powerful tool for communicating, and e-mail groups can be established to allow the tutor to easily contact every member of a group. Communication is the most important part of group working to get right, because poor communication or misinformation usually leads to conflict and problems in the group further down the line.

The form requires some information about preferred meeting places and times. Groups do not always fill this in but it gets them thinking at an early stage where, when and how often to meet.

M3: Get to Know Your Group

This handout consists of an exercise which is used in many similar forms across education and industry. The purpose is to act as an ice-breaker to group work, and to introduce people to each other. This exercise works best in a seminar environment where you want information shared between all the members of the group. The basic approach to this exercise is to ask each student to stand up and introduce themselves to the rest – an exercise most people find difficult and embarrassing. The method outlined in M2 removes the difficulties and at the same time gets the group interacting. Each member uses the handout as a guide to get key information out of their interviewee which they then present to the group. Simple, yet effective.

M4: Sharing responsibility in your group

There are two approaches to group work, and usually the experience of the group determines which approach they will take. The collaborative approach is where students do not undertake specific production roles, instead they all "pitch in". The rationale for this approach is that it is sometimes preferred by students who are unfamiliar with group working and inexperienced in production so they want to share the equipment and the decision making between them. However, this can lead to a slow group working process where decisions are difficult to make. While input from group members should always be encouraged, this blurring of the roles and responsibilities can lead to disruptive and disappointing group work which can put off students from further collaborations. A better approach is more opportunity for group work, perhaps shorter, more frequent projects. This means students can adopt a specific production role and still experience, through many projects, many other roles. This hierarchical approach is modelled on industry practice and gives students a more professional, responsible opportunity. However, specific production roles are only one half of successful production-based group work. There is also another level of group working activity: that of working as an individual amid peers in a group environment, with meetings, common goals and assessment targets to meet. This level requires further group roles to be undertaken by students – that simply of contributor to discussions at meetings, a "chair person" to help drive the meetings forward and keep the project on track, and someone to take responsibility for taking minutes in the meeting which can prove hugely beneficial not only to a tutor during group tutorials, but also for the group themselves if they have to produce a reflective essay.

The material handout M3 has been designed to help students see how their group role and their production role, should normally be involved in the group working process from start to finish. It outlines the level of responsibility each role entails, and illustrates that each full role (group and production included) equals approximately the same level of responsibility overall. The handout would need adjusting to suit different group practices; the example used here is for video production.

Links

- Watch the DVD chapters "Forming Groups" and "Allocating Roles" to the Compare Answers section to contrast and compare different approaches to these aspects of group work.
- Read the paper "Forming Groups in Media Production" by Judith Jones, in Part A of the Resource Pack.

M5: Group Meeting Report

This handout has been designed to provide a useful framework for students when they meet as a group. Usually this would happen in the students' own time and away from the tutor and this structure helps them make the most of these meetings. It focuses them to write some notes in summary of their meetings which is a useful resource for them and the tutor to help them reflect later on. It also helps them identify what needs to be done, and who should take responsibility. If taken seriously, this handout can be used as the basis for discussion in group meetings and can help the tutor to see how the weight of responsibility and roles are shared between the group members. The handout also helps the students identify who is not taking part in the meetings without making them feel too uncomfortable.

Tip

- Keep blank templates of these forms and handouts online as part of your HEIs website. The students can easily download them for use instead of relying on photocopying. Electronic copies of these templates are available on the GWAMP website as word documents for easy amending.

Materials M1 to M5 are all guiding sheets to set up a group to operate effectively. They can be introduced and explained in a seminar or lecture when the project brief is set. The earlier the better, since if a group begins the wrong way and bad habits set in, it is harder to reverse them. Therefore these materials are best introduced at first year level to establish best practice.

M6: Group Review Exercise

This is a useful exercise to use as the basis for a seminar discussion or group tutorial, at a mid-way point in the project's lifespan. Students identify and discuss their perceived strengths and weaknesses in group work. The second half of the exercise directs the students to think about the future of their group work, and develop improvement strategies. If each group completes this exercise in a seminar, then they can present their answers to the rest of the class afterwards to encourage sharing and debate about group practice. The important points to stress at the start of such a session are as follows: There is always "room for improvement", strengths and weaknesses may be identified by all, or some group members. Some members will have different ideas about the strengths and weaknesses. Students need to be committed to making improvements.

This exercise is very much focused on formative assessment and this kind of mid-way reflection is important because there is still time for the students to learn from any mistakes and improve, thus improving the quality of their work and their appreciation of the power of group work.

Links

- Watch the DVD chapters "Role of the Tutor" and "Formative Assessment" in the Compare Answers section to contrast and compare different approaches to these aspects of group work.
- Read the paper "Supporting Groups in Media Production" by Sheila Ollin, in Part A of the Resource Pack

M7: Individual Contribution Statement

This sheet has been supplied by Chester College in Warrington where it has been successfully used in reflecting on individual contributions to group work. Each student completes one of these forms which is then signed off in agreement by others in the group. The reflective comments each person writes could be informed by the use of Meeting Reports, such as those described in M4 above. The rationale behind the form is that each person can be self-assessed as part of the project work, and the written element is supported by agreement from the peers in the group who will only sign the sheet if what is written is accurate. A difficulty with this form might be the pressure an individual would feel to agree with the contents, because not signing would lead to confrontation. However, it would take a very strong personality to write a series of unjustified claims about their contribution and then show it to their colleagues. In a system where the tutor provides an individual mark (perhaps 10% above or below the group mark awarded) based on evidence of contribution, this is a good model to follow.

Links

- Watch the DVD chapter "Assessing Individuals" in the Compare Answers section to contrast and compare different approaches to this aspect of group work.

M8: Peer Assessment Sheet

This proforma has been developed by Bournemouth University Media School to improve its system of peer assessment over the last few years. Initially students were asked to write a paragraph on each of their peers (including themselves) and suggest a mark, which is then added to a matrix and averaged to produce a peer assessment mark for each individual. Feedback from students, however, highlighted that more guidelines would help them to know what kind of feedback to write, what the criteria for peer assessment should actually be, and how to mark fairly (i.e. what does 50%, 60% mean in terms of group work?) Since introducing the proforma, students are much happier providing marks and feedback for their peers. There are clear guidelines to follow, and marking criteria to adhere to. Students who do not adhere to the marking guidelines can be tracked and moderated.

Teaching Materials Key

Links

- Watch the DVD case study "Television Production" to hear how students react to the introduction of the proforma.

The proforma is divided into three sections. Firstly, a series of tick-box questions helps the assessor produce an overall impression of the assessed student's performance. However, there is no direct relationship between the tick-boxes chosen and the mark proposed. This would mean the process is purely scientific, whilst assessments of this type require judgements. Not all criteria listed in this first section should be judged as equally weighted. They are simply different criteria.

Links

- Read the full interview transcript with Paul Inman, Subject Leader Television Production to hear the opposing argument for using "in the box" thinking. The interview transcripts can be found on the GWAMP website at <http://www.gwamp.bournemouth.ac.uk>

The second section is marked "supporting evidence" and is where the assessor writes a paragraph evidencing why they have chosen certain tick-boxes. This helps to prevent claims of unfairness being made. It is more difficult to include negative personal views because students are providing evidence based on the criteria they have been looking at in the first section. This evidence helps ensure fairness, but it also helps build up potential feedback for the assessed student. In a group of six students, each individual could receive up to six separate paragraphs of feedback, as well as tutor feedback. This helps to improve the quality of reflection and learning.

The third section is where the student proposes a mark for the assessed individual. This uses the standard percentage assessment system. The marking scheme (also included in M7) is similar to that used to assess other types of work and it allows students not only to take part in assessment but also to understand and see transparency in assessment decisions.

These proformas are designed to be given to students as a double-sided handout, with the marking scheme on the reverse.

Top Ten Tips for Group Work

1. Responsibility

Distribute responsibility to give everyone part-ownership of the project

2. Problems

Deal with group working problems as they arise; don't let them fester and grow

3. Contributions

Ensure every group member is listened to and allowed to contribute

4. Individual Commitments

Make sure the every group members' time commitments and constraints are taken into account when arranging meetings

5. Contact Details

Swap contact details to help keep in touch with each other. Use a notice board to leave messages or use an e-mail list if available

6. Communication

Make sure all group members are kept informed about decisions, dates and meetings

7. Dominating Members

Don't allow members to dominate and take over other peoples' tasks and responsibilities

8. Regular Contact

Have meetings at least once a week at a time and place everyone can manage

9. Meeting Chair

Elect someone to chair the meetings to ensure it moves along swiftly and all key discussion points are addressed and action points decided

10. Minutes

Elect someone to take minutes of meetings to help keep a log that will help you and your tutor reflect on your group work

Some things to think about...

- o When is it ok to be late or miss a group meeting?
- o What does "on time" mean?
- o How should you communicate to the rest of the group if you're running late?
- o What do you do if a group member's work isn't up to scratch?
- o What should the group do if a member is not pulling their weight?

[illegible]

Copy this form for each member of the group and your tutor

Get to know your group

Interview Exercise

Working in pairs, interview your partner using the questions areas below. After the allotted time, you will be asked to give a presentation about your partner to the rest of the group.

Part A

1. Personal details (name, where they're from etc.)
 2. Background (why they have chosen this course, what they want to get out of it)
 3. Greatest personal achievement
-

Part 2

4. Preferred role to undertake in the group work (director/camera/sound/editor/production manager)
 5. Why?
 6. What personal and professional qualities can they bring to the group?
-

Prepare a short presentation based on the answers you have gained, ready to present to the rest of the group.

Sharing responsibility in your group

Project Name

Every group member should have an equal share of the responsibility of your project. Your first group activity is to complete this form. If you have worked as a group before, try to choose a different role to give you opportunities to learn new skills.

The chart below is to give you an idea about the level of responsibility your role has, and when it comes into play. If your group divides the roles as shown below, your group will function more effectively as a team and you will each have a share of the responsibility.

Some roles have supporting jobs. These are listed in italics, in the left hand column.


Role	Planning	Production	The Edit	Responsibilities total
Director	1 (meetings input)	4	1 (advice)	6
Camera <i>Director assistant</i>	1 (meetings input) 1	3	1 (advice)	6
Sound <i>Note taker</i>	1 (meetings input) 1	3	1 (advice)	6
Production Assistant <i>Meeting Chair</i>	3	2	1 (advice)	6
Production Manager	4	1	1 (advice)	6
Editor <i>Runner</i>	1 (meetings input)	1	4	6

Name	Role
	Director
	Camera
	Sound
	Production Assistant
	Production Manager
	Editor


Group Meeting Report

Name of group		Date of Meeting	
Members Present			
Members Absent			
Summary of Meeting			
Things to be done and who by			
Place and time of next meeting			
Who should attend			

Group Review Exercise (PART 1)

Rate your group on the following		Weakness				Strength
1	Working together as a group					
2	Commitment to the group's goals					
3	Effectiveness of group meetings					
4	Communication among group members					
5	Members getting their work done on time					
6	Quality of work produced so far					
7	Motivation of group members for the project					
8	All members sharing the workload					

10. Are there any strengths or weaknesses not mentioned above? If so, describe them.
11. What do you like best about your group?
12. What do you like least about your group?

Overall rating		Not performing well				Performing very well
	Groups performance so far					

Group Review Exercise (PART 2)

Group

Referring to PART 1 of this exercise that you completed individually, now as a group discuss the strengths and weaknesses that you each identified and complete PART 2 below.

As a group, reach agreement about the following:

A. The groups top three strengths:

- 1
- 2
- 3

B. What can the group do to reinforce and ensure these strengths are utilised?

C. The groups top three weaknesses:

- 1
- 2
- 3

D. What can the group do to correct these weaknesses?

E. Do any group working problems or issues remain that need further discussion?

Individual Contribution Statement

Your name:

Your group:

My individual contributions to the project's work and achievements have been... *please write a list, continue overleaf if necessary*

What you write is valid only when it has been signed by all the other people in your group with whom you have been working.

name (print)	signature
name (print)	signature
name (print)	signature
name (print)	signature

Peer Assessment Sheet

Name of student being assessed:

Please put a tick in the box that best describes your view

	Agree		Disagree			
	A	B	C	D	E	
Makes an excellent contribution to group discussions						Does not contribute much to discussions
Can be relied upon totally to carry out allocated roles/tasks						Needs supervision to complete tasks
Has developed high quality project management/technical skills for role						Needs considerable support to carry out role well
Very effective member of the team						Does not work easily in a team
Accepts and acts upon advice and criticism						Not very willing to accept advice and criticism
Is always punctual and reliable						Often late and/or unreliable

Supporting evidence:

Mark proposed: % [PTO for grade equivalents]

Your name Your group Date

Signature

Marking Scheme for Peer Assessment

70+% First Mainly As

This mark applies only to students who have consistently made a full and exemplary contribution to group work.

They have been fully involved in group discussions and decision making, and can always be relied upon to carry out all the allocated roles and tasks within the group work. They have shown highly-developed technical abilities that allow them to perform their roles effectively, and / or they have consistently demonstrated good project management skills by planning and delivering key tasks in an exemplary manner. They have shown a willingness to accept and act upon advice and criticism made by their colleagues in the group as well as the tutor. They have demonstrated an excellent professional attitude and are always present, on time, and fully involved.

60-69% II i Mainly As and Bs

These students have made a good range of contributions to group discussions, and have shown themselves to be reliable in carrying out their allocated roles and tasks. They have developed good technical abilities and understandings to allow them to perform their role effectively, and / or they have good time management and project management skills that enable them to plan and deliver their part of the group work. They have shown an ability to act upon advice and criticism made by their colleagues, and their good professional attitude is evidenced by their commitment and punctuality for group meetings and activities.

50-59% II ii Mainly Cs or a mixture of grades

Students in this category have made a fair contribution to group discussions. They may have needed to be supervised to ensure completion of their tasks, and may have required some technical or project management support. They may have sometimes been late to group meetings or activities or have been unreliable in meeting deadlines. Their work is competent but lacks flair.

40-49% III Mainly Ds

These students have not contributed much to group discussions and have proved to be unreliable in completing tasks without supervision and technical support. They do not work easily in a team and are not willing to accept advice and criticism.

Under 40% Fail Mainly Es

Students in this category have performed unsatisfactorily in the group activity. This mark is awarded exceptionally and you should discuss with your tutor before submitting the form.

Such students have not made an acceptable contribution to the group work and have consistently shown themselves to be unreliable in meeting deadlines and completing allocated tasks. They do not accept advice or criticism and have not demonstrated a competent level of technical skills.



part C

dvd resource

Overview

Organisational flow-chart

Contextual Overviews of featured case studies

Radio Production at Chester College

Advertising at University of Gloucestershire

Television Production at Bournemouth University

Overview

The Case Studies

This DVD features three case studies of different methods of assessing group work in media production. They are: Radio Production at Chester College, Advertising at the University of Gloucestershire and Television Production at Bournemouth University. Each case study is presented as a series of interviews with a tutor and students. The emphasis of these case studies is on views and opinions, to convey the personal feelings behind group work. They reveal the methodology and reasoning behind the strategies chosen by the staff, and critical feedback from the students involved. To provide a context for the case studies, the three institutions have written a short overview which is included in the Resource Pack. Where appropriate, supporting written materials from the case studies have also been reproduced in Part B.

Compare Answers

As well as being able to view the three case studies in their entirety, we have utilised the capabilities of DVD technology to provide an additional feature. The case study material has also been re-arranged to allow comparison between institutional methods. Select from the DVD menus a stage in group work (e.g. forming groups, teaching group working skills, formative assessment) and contrast and compare the different methods from the three institutions.

Producing the DVD

This DVD was produced in association with Chester College in Warrington and the University of Gloucestershire. The project team would like to express their gratitude to the staff and students in these institutions and in Bournemouth University who gave up their time to take part.

The production team consisted of three (interviewer, camera / lighting, and sound recorder). We filmed the interviews on the mini-DV format in locations arranged by each institution. The footage was edited using Apple Final Cut Pro software and compiled into DVD format using Adobe Photoshop and Apple DVD Studio Pro. Once the DVD was created, it was mass-duplicated for inclusion with the Resource Pack. The DVD has been structured to link thematically with the Resource Pack.

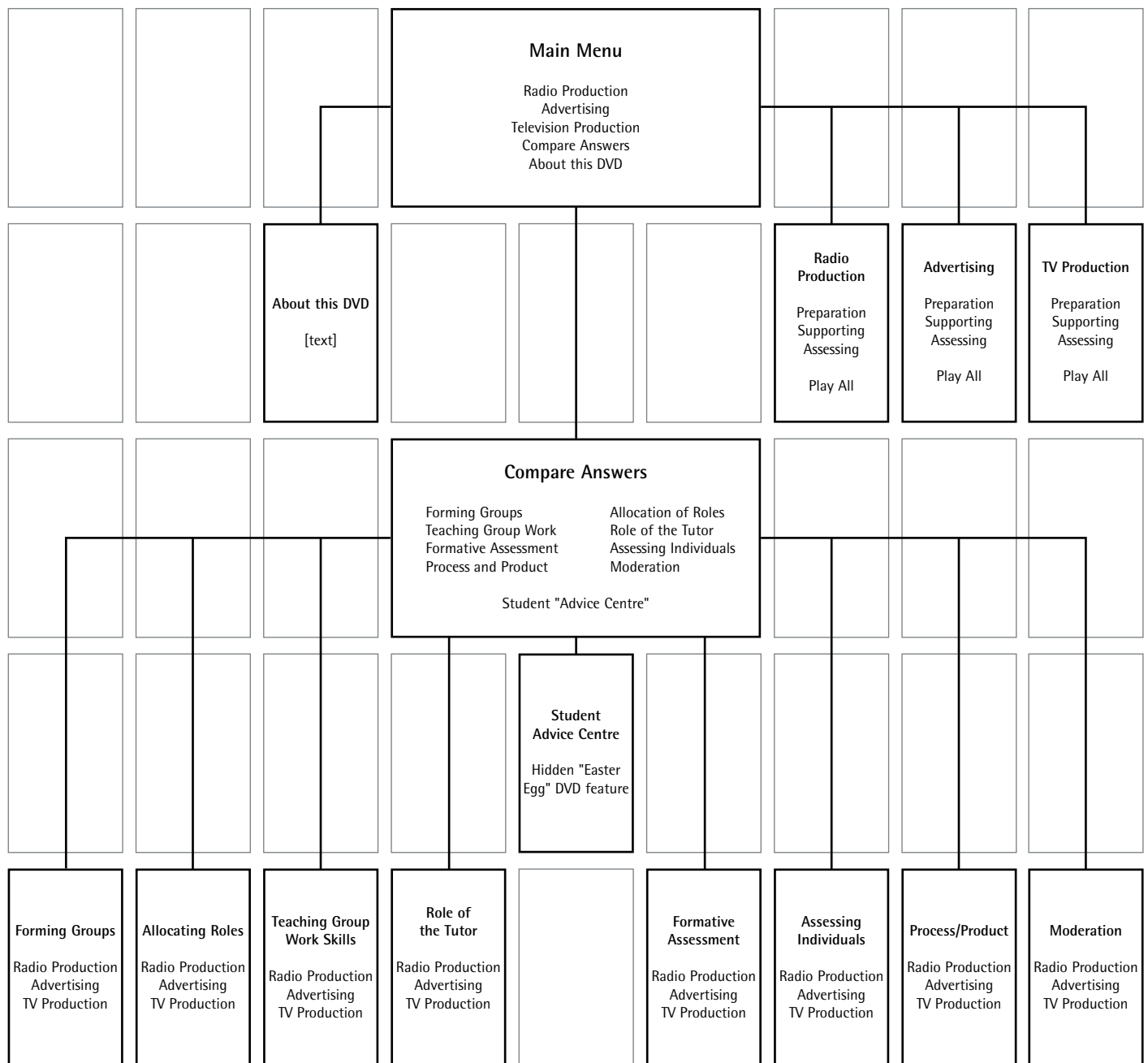
Easter Egg

In the spirit of the DVD format, there is a hidden extra feature (nicknamed an "Easter Egg"). By cycling through the options on the Compare Answers page you can play a clip featuring advice students have for other students who are about to work in groups for the first time.

Links

- The GWAMP website contains more video case studies that can be viewed in streaming video, or downloaded as a transcript. Check them out at <http://www.gwamp.bournemouth.ac.uk>

DVD Organisational flow-chart



DVD Contextual Overview

Radio Production at Chester College, Warrington Campus (formerly the Faculty of HE at Warrington Collegiate Institute.)

Module	Radio Production 3
Module length and year	1 semester (15 weeks)
No. Students	28
No. Groups	6
Prior Group Working Experience	Working in pairs and in groups of approx 4 in previous, Level 1, modules

Overview of Module

This module runs for half of the second year of the degree. Students work in the same groups of either four or five members for the duration of the semester. (A semester is 15 weeks of which 12 are teaching weeks and three are for exams and assessments in academic subjects. There are no formal exams in practical subjects like Radio but there can be analytical and reflective written assignments.)

The first half of the semester has lectures and workshops in Law, News Writing, Presenting & Production, etc. (The students have already done magazine and short features in their first year.) The second half is making live radio programmes that are assessed. Each week, each group produces a live, 15-minutes news & magazine programme that is broadcast on the student radio station (The SOURCE 1251 AM). Their 'class' contact with the module tutor is for one hour per week; 30 minutes of preparation, fifteen minutes of observed live programme and 15 minutes feedback. They have programme production meetings without the tutor during the week leading to their next programme. There is a technical support person to assist them in practical operational matters.

Programme brief

The programme brief is loosely based on Radio 1's Newsbeat, but is very much aimed at the local student audience. Mixed news and mixed sport are required (IRN is used) and there are entertainment, lifestyle and issue-based features. The predominant character of the programme is live but some items may be pre-recorded. Formative assessment is given immediately after each programme and this is also sent to the group members by email. The tutor keeps a record of his observations and

keeps recordings of each programme. The group reports on which person did what for each programme. There is scope for some interpretation of the brief and the modus operandi of the group; this is negotiated with the tutor and continually monitored. After the last programme the group has to produce an overall report and a breakdown of who did what. This serves as a check against the tutor's records. The group is given direction on how to conduct the peer assessment and this is presented and discussed in a one-hour group viva voce at the end of the module.

Assessment

Students receive individual marks.

80% of their mark is on their work for the six programmes
20% is allocated by their peers in the group.

The peer assessment is derived like this: -

- The tutor gives an overall mark for the group's work.
- This is multiplied by the number of students in the group
- The group then apportions the marks to its members. This is discussed and, if necessary, moderated at the group viva voce.
- This mark is then weighted to 20%

Special Notes

The peer assessment element was introduced as a result of the tutor's involvement with the GWAMP Project. The rationale for peer assessment is that much work takes place without the tutor being present and the students should have an opportunity to apportion some marks according to input to the production process.

DVD Contextual Overview

Advertising Agency at the University of Gloucestershire

Module	PM 204 Advertising Agency
Module length and year	6 weeks, Level 2
No. Students	28
No. Groups	8
Prior Group Working Experience	Yes

Overview of Module

The module aims to introduce the practice of working as part of an 'Agency Team', as a photographer, copywriter, art director, typographer, illustrator or visualiser.

Students are given a choice of practical advertising project

Project brief

Students will be given the opportunity to form into creative groups of up to four members, to work collectively towards the production of an advertising campaign. The module therefore allows for interaction in a 'live' sense of the various team members as photographers, copywriters, art directors, typographers or illustrators etc.

A series of critiques will be used as a means of progressing work. One of these will involve a formal 'pitch' to the module cohort and tutor, where final campaign ideas are professionally presented by each 'agency'.

Finished work will take the form of a folder of developmental roughs and scamps, showing clear progression towards final colour laser visuals and photographs.

Assessment

100% coursework /practical project.

File of developmental work, client presentation visuals/ photographs.

DVD Contextual Overview

Television Production at Bournemouth University

Module	Television Production 1
Module length and year	3 terms, Level C
No. Students	48
No. Groups	9
Prior Group Working Experience	None

Overview of Module

This module runs for the whole of the first year of the degree. Students work in the same groups for the duration of the year, and produce four short films produced on location. They also work in larger groups in the television studio producing live programmes. Every week the students have a production lecture, and a follow-up seminar dealing with specific issues. The year is roughly divided into two halves, first looking at documentary, then looking at drama.

Project brief

In their production groups the students will produce two documentary pieces, the second of which will be summatively assessed. They will then produce two drama pieces, again the second one being summatively assessed.

Assessment

The assessment of the unit is varied, and comprises the following elements:

A group mark for the completed projects: 50% (drama and documentary)

An individual mark for a Production Analysis of one of the productions: 15%

A peer assessment mark derived from averaging of marks from self and peers: 35%

Special Notes

The peer assessment was improved this year by the introduction of a proforma that was developed by the University's involvement with the GWAMP project.