

Pair Interview 8

<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>I would like to welcome and thank you for participating in today's focus group discussion as part of my Master's Thesis in the Educational Leadership programme on the matter of discussing on what it means to study in an academic environment in a Finnish higher education institution and in this case the University of Jyväskylä. My name is Christine Niemi and I am a Master's degree student in the Educational Leadership programme myself.</p> <p>As an international student in an international programme, previous experiences of teaching and learning in different places come here together and may influence the educational setting, in which you find yourself in, in various ways, positively and negatively.</p> <p>The aim of this focus group discussion is therefore to provide an opportunity for you to share your experiences and thoughts in an official space as a student here at JYU with specific focus on your engagement in academic work and the academic environment.</p> <p>Your views will be used to understand the teaching and learning environment from the student perspective and eventually further develop certain content areas such as research methods courses, research seminars and individual supervision. The main aim of the research at this point is awareness building. By sharing the findings of this research, it is hoped that providers of international programmes can better respond to the diverse experiences and backgrounds of international participants.</p> <p>The focus group discussion should not last longer than an hour. It's video-and audio-recorded and you have already signed the consent papers, so we can start.</p> <p>So, there are going to be four main themes, one is individual experiences, one is group work experiences, then we talk a bit about support here at the university and then you can make recommendations as well.</p>
<p>P15</p>	<p>Yeah.</p>
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Ok? We start out with individual experiences. As you represent a group of diverse students, you bring a variety of teaching and learning backgrounds, motivations and experiences with you. So. we start with very general questions. How do you manage your studies here at JYU, how would you describe your study experiences so far and what has gone well and what has been difficult? I can repeat also.</p>
<p>P16</p>	<p>How we manage?</p>
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Yeah.</p>
<p>P16</p>	<p>For me it was easy, it was a lot of things to do, but I am liking the topics. So, I was sitting at the library, that's the only thing because with home, and weather, I can't study. That's the only thing.</p>

Interviewer	So, the weather has influenced...
P16	Yeah, but how I manage. I didn't have any difficulties actually.
Interviewer	Ok.
P15	Actually for me it was a little bit different. I have done my studies back home and we have a totally different way or manner of studying there because actually our assessments are usually book exams or exams...
P16	Ah.
P15	... and when I came here, I found a different way of assessment and actually these assignments and the writing process and the reading was a little bit difficult for me, but.. And because of, there is another reason, this is my first experience studying in English, so probably both of these, coming from another education system, which is a little bit different in the assessment process, but also my first experience in English and these two were the main difficulties. But I think, yeah... at the beginning, I think that I managed very well. I can tell that from my results (laughing), which are one way of the evaluation, but also when I discussed with my teachers for example about my feedback or what I should do better or what I should have done a little bit better, there is always a way to improve something or to learn something. And I think I am managing very well (laughing).
Interviewer	Ok, so you directly approach the teacher in case you wanted more feedback, or?
P15	Yeah, that's true. The person I contacted, is always helpful to me and I really rely on what they really have to say about my work.
P16	I had the same issues, but it didn't feel difficult. Maybe in the beginning, the English and the assignment process all the time, but it wasn't like difficult, difficult.
Interviewer	Ok. So, I just give you a bit background of you both because you both have filled out this survey, very quickly. So, P16 is from (home country P16) and you basically studied in (mother tongue P16) only, right?
P16	Yeah. Not only, not basically, only.
Interviewer	You have not submitted a thesis during your Bachelor's studies.
P16	(shaking head)
Interviewer	P15 is from (home country P15).
P15	Your whole studies were in (mother tongue P15).
P15	Yeah. But I have submitted a thesis for my previous Master's degree in (name of degree).
P16	Ah, so you know the process.

P15	Oh, sorry (correction of name of the degree).
P16	You know the process.
Interviewer	But it was in (mother tongue P15)?
P15	Yeah, in (mother tongue P15), yeah.
Interviewer	So, when you think back on your previous experiences as a student back home or in general, did it help you here, did it prepare you for the studies here, did it make things more complicated maybe?
P16	It's totally different, you cannot compare the systems. From the university, the structures of the university, the classrooms, it's totally different.
Interviewer	Can you elaborate on that a bit?
P16	Yeah, in (home country P16) the presentation is not obligatory. So you can only go for the book exam, only, So, you don't have any interaction with your classmates or the teacher if you don't want to. And here you have to be in the classes, which is very good because you interact with each other. It's very good. I wouldn't have assignments, not at all, only book exam. So after all, you don't learn. You learn the course topics and you are going there with like reading 20 pages. Here it's better, it's much better for me, the system, the process.
P15	I will go a little bit back to my thesis process...
P16	And I am sorry, unorganized in (home country P16), unorganized, here I am sending a message to C3, she is replying to me after one hour. I can get in contact with the teacher, with the secretary, to everyone. In (home country P16), you are phoning, you are phoning, nothing.
Interviewer	Nothing. Ok, interesting.
P16	(looking at P16, laughing)
P15	Ok, I will go back a little bit to my Master thesis in (home country P15) and then also the experience that I am having here. Actually, there is a possibility both levels, Bachelor's level, but also Master's level, you can chose to do a book exam and to be graduated or to go through the thesis process. And actually in both my Bachelor's, I've chosen the book exam, but when I've done another Master's degree in (name of the degree) back at home, I've gone through this thesis process and I had a supervisor. He helped me a lot and I am really happy with what I have done there, but what I am experiencing here, it was the most wonderful experience for me in all this academic year because my Master's thesis supervisor not only is supporting me, but he's trying to facilitate all this process introducing me to other researchers, which is, which I found very helpful and amazing how a Master degree student can, why not collaborate, but also give support and advice from other researchers who have done pretty much the same, but have another insight and another kind of support and help

	from them, not only from my Master's thesis supervisor. But also the whole process, I think, like this research seminars that we've done, but also quantitative and qualitative. We are not talking about the quality of the courses, we probably talking a bit later, but if you think the whole process, so research seminars and then qualitative and quantitative research... (looking at P16)
P16	... methodologies.
P15	... methodology. Even we are complaining about this academic reading and writing, but the whole process... now if you, if you...
P16	No, they support the student from all these perspectives.
P15	... summarize in the whole thesis process, I found it very helpful and supportive and I am having a great experience.
P16	Yeah, for me it was very new, very new.
Interviewer	So, you basically have written one before, so...
P15	Actually...
P16	Not only the thesis, all this communication with the teacher, all the... it was very new for me. I mean they gave us their phone numbers, very new for me.
Interviewer	Ok.
P15	Actually what T12 (= thesis supervisor) is doing, but probably, most probably because the my Master's topic is related to his area of research, but how he was trying to help me, it is amazing.
Interviewer	That's nice to hear.
P15	Yeah.
Interviewer	We look not a bit deeper into individual experiences when it comes to writing an essay or even your thesis 'cause this is an individual experience as well. I will give you this, but I will read it out loud also. This is a quote directly from the University webpage. So, often as part of the course it is here to write an essay in an academic format, which is referred to academic writing. Additionally, the so-called final project is to conduct a small-scale research and write a Master's thesis supervised by professors and senior lecturers. You have mentioned that already. The thesis topics are related to the research areas of the Faculty of Education. The thesis process is supported by research methods courses, research seminars and individual supervision. So, now we can also talk about the quality of those courses.
P15	Yeah.
Interviewer	Generally, what we, what I would like to address here, how do you approach an assignment? And could you give an example of an assignment you were pleased with

	and one you were disappointed with. So, now you can talk also about academic reading and...
P15	And writing. Yeah.
Interviewer	... and writing course.
P15	Actually, we are talking... do you want me to talk about the assignments we have done regarding the thesis or other courses, too?
Interviewer	Other courses, too. Yeah. Doesn't need to be about thesis.
P15	Ok, one course that I really enjoyed doing the assignment was Comparative International Education, T4's course. And because probably I really like to know about education systems and a way to compare and which can be the theory to compare these education systems. And the possibility to choose the topic and fortunately the team was good (laughing). This time was good.
Interviewer	Oh, by the way. We currently talk about individual...
P15	Individual, yeah.
Interviewer	So, group work is the next section.
P15	Ok.
Interviewer	But, we can keep that in mind.
P15	And I really enjoyed that course. The presentation. We have done a presentation about Neoliberalism in different countries regarding the education systems and the education policies and then I have done, I have done an assignment comparing this education policies in (name of countries) countries, which I found very interesting because there were some articles that I found regarding (home country P15) in comparison to other countries but pretty much we have similar policies. There are countries which have done very few, very step, a lot improvements and there are countries, they have to do a lot. So, for me it was very good and ok, I can say it, I took a five (laughing, saying it very proudly).
Interviewer	But, it is...
P15	But, what is important for me, it was like I had two assignments in the same course. One about Neoliberalism and the other, the opportunity to compare different education system within the region which is my interest.
Interviewer	So, basically you enjoyed the course (P15: Yeah) because it was very related to what you were interested in.
P15	Yeah.
Interviewer	Anything about an example you were not happy with or disappointed with?

P15	Yeah, it's (pause). Yeah, I found very, not difficult, but not probably related to what we wanted to do in the quantitative research methodology, but also this academic reading and writing, which I found not connected very well and coordinated very well to the thesis process. It is supposed that this course is, should help us in this thesis process (P16 slightly laughing). But I found like doing things for the sake of the course and the amount, the amount of the credits is not a motivating one. So, you can do work, but if the amount of the credits is a little bit higher probably we can get a good motivation to do that or... but also if the course is coordinated a little bit better because the course is offered from the language center and other courses are offered from the Faculty of Education and I felt that there is no connection or coordination in what we are doing in the Faculty of Education and what we are doing. But also, the lengths of the sessions. Three hours in a row, so from 9 to 12 for it's fore me a little bit difficult to support.
P16	Yeah, with T1 of course.
P15	So, those sessions, those session were a little bit...
Interviewer	.. too long.
P15	... long, yeah. And after two hours, you feel a little bit bored, not (P16 starting to talk, check phone recording).
P16	It was long because the teacher let us alone to do a task. It's better to cover these three hours, not to leave us do things.
P15	But she was trying to keep us engaged, this is true. So, she was trying to find things to do in class.
P16	You know, I disagree. The last three classes was only for writing, sorry. (P15 talking at the same time)
P15	But as I mentioned, as I mentioned it was doing things for the sake of the course, which is, has nothing wrong, which is not wrong at all, but if we do assignments for the course that are going to help us in the thesis process, it should have been better. This is my opinion.
P16	And I found very interesting that all the courses that are related to leadership because that's what I want to do in the future. And this guidance and counselling because the topic was open, so I decided what I am going to do, which I liked very much. When I have the support of the teachers (P15 slightly nodding), I mean for example T6's class. He gave us 50 articles and one book and he was like 'Here is your material, find if you want something more, but here this, interact with this, reflect on that.' So, I had things to read on my own interest, which was very helpful and also the reframing leadership, T6's again. He gave us a case and then we had to analyse it. It was very interesting because you reflect on that, I was thinking a lot, it was very nice. I didn't like academic reading and writing for sure and quantitative because it wasn't the content of the course. I think that the academic reading and writing, she gave us a task to write a literature review, it was very helpful at this moment. Early, yes, but we.. I was in the position to sit and think about my thesis process, the theories that I will

	use. So, it helped me after all. But the teacher wasn't supported (=supportive). Tell me, what is a literature review, help me a bit, don't tell me 'You have to write a literature review', especially when it's only for 2 ECTS. That was the problem and it was a good task, very helpful after all, but in a wrong way.
Interviewer	Considering you haven't even done a thesis before, so...
P16	Yeah. And she knew that 'cause she asked us in the very first lesson (P15 laughing).
P15	Yeah.
P16	Who, how much of you have done a thesis. Three of them, only. So, if the teacher supports us, it will be very easy. I understand that it's more individual to study here because they give you the material and you have to do individual work and that's totally ok, but support me in this. T6 supports, T4 supports, all the other supports and also quantitative. Three courses of theory and after a month go to the computers, nothing, zero, zero, zero, nothing, nothing.
P15	Yeah, more sessions. There was a period that we had the lessons, sessions, lessons sessions and then we had demo sessions.
P16	Four sessions, something like that... after a month.
P15	So, it was like, you know...
P16	Nothing, we remember nothing.
P15	... disconnected to... (P16 talking at the same time)
P16	It was better to have the theory and then lab, theory, lab, like that, not all the theory together and then go to the labs. It was... I have learned nothing.
Interviewer	Is this the SPSS.
P15 & P16	Yeah, Yes.
P15	Yeah, but...
P16	Did you (addressing the interviewer) have the same problem last year?
Interviewer	Similar, yeah.
P15	Actually, what I think, it's a previously to being enrolled in that course, we have filled a survey and in my thinking, it was like use the data of this survey to explain the theory, to explain each, how the demo sessions we have done, the practical activities like Pi-Test, T-Test and everything else. And we discovered, at the end of the course, that we were analysing those data, but nobody told us like 'This is the survey you have filled. These are the data and we are going to analyse this data.' It should have been better, but also had a meaning for us. So, probably it would have been a little bit more

	practical to understand?
Interviewer	What survey did you do before?
P16	How many credits...
P15	We filled the survey...
Interviewer	Ah, you filled the survey...?
P15	Yeah, everyone...
P16	In the beginning, at the very beginning...
P15	... so, 40 students, which I think is a very good sample. 40 students.
Interviewer	Yeah, it is.
P15	We, before to start the quantitative course, we filled this survey each of us.
P16	What about the credits, your average,...
Interviewer	Ok.
P15	Work experience and actually, it would have been better to analyse those data, which we practically did, but we didn't know (P16 slightly laughing) about it.
Interviewer	Ah, ok.
P15	So, it was a problem, I think, in teaching this course.
P16	The teaching because they gave us...
P15	... explaining things to this...
P16	... a paper with the guidelines and was like 'Go to, open SPSS, click 'Analyse', then click 'Continue', then 'Ok', then change that name to that name.' Why I am doing that? I have no... I just, I was clicking 'Oh, fuck, I am done' Exercise one is done.
P15	Yeah, it should have been better if somebody..
Interviewer	To connect.
P16	Yeah, and also the other thing...
P15	Yeah and also explain something about the programme.
P16	... we had the class with T7, Transformative Organizations, something... I don't remember the name. It was four sessions. The last session was for our presentation. In three sessions, I remember nothing from the course, nothing (with emphasis). T6's classes was like four session or five session, but it was three hours. So, and it is T6.



	So, I am always participating, but..
P15	No, tell the truth, you are in love with him (laughing).
P16	Yeah, maybe. (laughing) But T7's, I remember nothing. It was too short.
Interviewer	Is it also maybe related to the teaching style? Is there a difference between those or why do you think you are not listening to that one person, but you listen to the other?
P16	Because T6 is very inspiring. It's... he is my favourite.
P15	And also you mentioned before, you are interested in what T6 is teaching.
P16	Yeah, but In T7's I was interested. It was how to transform an organization, something like that, it's on my area that I want to work, but the course, I don't remember. I don't remember, only three session. I am doing a Master's degree here, why only three sessions? Don't I have to more deepening my...
P15	We also have talked about the lengths of the sessions, which are yeah.. We would prefer courses with a little bit...
P16	It's good to have a lot of courses, but more... I don't think about the ECTS, make the whole course for one month, two months, three months, not three sessions.
Interviewer	Too short.
P16	Too short. I learn nothing, I don't remember nothing.
Interviewer	Unfortunately.
P16	Yeah.
Interviewer	Now we look into group work. You (addressing P15) have mentioned already a bit about that (P15 shaking head, not sure why?). So, a lot of people I have talked to before. This is the first time they actually are involved in group work. So, they haven't really experienced that before in their previous studies. So we can talk about this a little bit as well, but... so, very similar questions. How do you approach a given assignment when you have a group work assignment? Can you give an example of an assignment you were pleased with and why, and one you were disappointed with and why?
P16	I didn't have any problems. (P15 shaking head in disbelief) I didn't have any problems. The only thing that I can't understand, but I was the lucky one, was that they put Bachelor's exchange students with Master's students. That doesn't work, doesn't work.
Interviewer	Why doesn't it work?
P16	Because I am here for a purpose, I am a Master's degree student and I have in the same group a 20 years old Bachelor's exchange student, who is in Finland to drink

	like a Finnish. Sorry, that doesn't work. So the first that I am saying when I am, when we have group work, because I had one group work with an exchange student here, but I was very lucky, I said to him 'I know that you are exchange, I know that you are not interested. If you are not, go. Drop the class because here it's my Master's degree, I want good grade. If you don't want to, go. Go, go, drop the class.'
Interviewer	What was the reaction?
P16	He understand me. He was like 'Ok, I understand.' And I said that to two of them. The first one, who was ok, the second one, dropped the class. He said 'Sorry.' because she dropped the class like after two sessions. He said 'Sorry.' but it was better. It was better. So I didn't have any bad experience, only that is my like the only problem. Otherwise, you have to communicate with the other, it's... if I can't communicate with the others and set my rules, my limits and the other as well, I didn't have any problem with group work, not at all.
Interviewer	When you think about writing together an essay, how do you approach that because we have talked in previous groups that there were sometimes difficulties with the writing style...
P16	Ok,...
Interviewer	... and writing skills of the person.
P16	It depends, I had for example the group work with (name of a student) and she didn't understand. We had to write for two articles and she didn't understand the context. So, I read the articles, I made my notes, I explained everything to her because she is writing better than me, she wrote down, together but she wrote down.
Interviewer	But you worked together...
P16	Yeah, yeah, yeah because I explained to her the articles. She didn't understand the articles.
Interviewer	So, lack of English language skills, or?
P16	It was difficult the article, for qualitative (looking at P15). The articles were difficult. So, because I am more focused when I am reading and I am making notes. So, I took my notes, I explained to her. She was like 'Ok, so here....' and we discussed what the structure would be and everything, but she did the final typing. Other group works, we delegate the sections and we wrote and then we all make corrections. Yeah, that's all.
Interviewer	What about you (addressing P15)?
P15	At the beginning, I had the most horrible, horrible, horrible experience (P16 laughing) and I still remember... T4's course (P16 laughing and nodding), that orientation to leadership because T4 has... One thing that I don't like in T4's course and I can understand him, but he is choosing the groups and probably I would like to have my opinion and my opportunity to choose people that I like.

P16	But you will not choose the people you will work with later.
P15	I change my strategy later... So, I had to work as P16 mentioned before with a really nice Chinese girl (very sarcastic tone) (P16 laughing)...
Interviewer	Exchange student?
P15	Exchange student in her Bachelor and with another one from Germany, an Erasmus student, she was here for three months. And their idea of leaders helping poor people and poor students, I really shared that idea, I really liked that idea (not sure if serious) (P16: What a Robin Hood. P16 laughing), but when it comes to work to write things down and to do a presentation together, it was the worst, the worst experience in my life.
Interviewer	Because they didn't...
P15	They didn't, they didn't do anything. They send last minute to download their slides like at 12pm (meaning midnight) and we had a presentation at 8 in the morning...
P16	That's why groups have to work together, not individually.
P15	.. and we started with, we started to work together, we set deadlines. They didn't respect any kind of deadlines and when I saw that presentation in the morning, I was ashamed about me...
Interviewer	Why do you think they didn't...
P15	... because I was doing... Because probably it was also for them the beginning because it was September as I remember and probably they had different idea about presentations because in my mind, the idea of a presentation, it does not matter if the course is pass and fail, it doesn't matter if the course is five credits, for me it's important to do a very good presentation. And...
P16	Also, it was our first class. So, the Master's degree were very anxious and stressed about our first presentation.
P15	And I found myself in a presentation that I didn't like. T4 was so nice to spend nice words for us, but when I...
Interviewer	You didn't feel comfortable.
P15	No. Absolutely no. And what I really, I would like you, I would like to share another experience that I had and which I suggested also to C3 and T3 in that period because we come from different education systems, different backgrounds, we don't have the same idea of work or let's say working in groups. I had an experience for example, I have been in a training seminar, teacher training seminar in (name of country) and we had to work to, there were 25 countries, so 25 peoples from different countries and we had to work for two weeks together, but what we have done the first day, it was like 'How to work together.' So, we have spend a whole day with a trainer and we learned how to work together and then we start working and then we did a very wonderful job

	there. So, what I am suggesting, this training sessions, it can be one, two or three how to work in a group work for me are very important one. It. Should. Have. Been.
Interviewer	Basically, P16 made that by herself. Ok, these are the rules, these are my limitations..
P16	Yeah.
P15	Yeah.
Interviewer	... this is what I want.
P16	Yeah, and tell me what you expect from me. And also there also things that I really love in group works. You interact with people from other cultures. So, you learn. It's not only the group (P15 shaking head in disbelief). I am trying, when I have group works to learn something from each other.
Interviewer	But that's obviously the difference you can see how people work together like even between you two.
P15	Then I am sorry to say that but I change the strategy to like or complaining about the fact me being in that group and going there and can I change or we find another strategy like sitting next to each other, so probably we have the chance to say 'Hi, do you want to work with me?' but that's not good. That's not good because probably even me I would like to enjoy, I would like to have the opportunity also learn from these other people. So it's not only about me, it's not only about responsibility, but also to have this kind of learning person from the other.
P16	And just bonding 'cause we are few people.
P15	But actually my first experiences were not good at all. So, I had, I've been in this uncomfortable situation or in another one, which we had to cover the work for another student and we have done, I am talking me and another student we have done his work. That was my first experiences.
Interviewer	Was there some kind of consequences for the other student, who didn't do anything?
P15	Ähhh, actually no (P16: No.), it was a group decision, so he did something. It was nothing connected to what we have written and what was the topic of the assignment and we covered that. It was not a good thing that we have done that, but it was a group decision.
Interviewer	Do you have any experience which was nice? This was quite negative.
P15	(thinking "sound")
P16	Come on, with (name of student).
P15	Yeah, yeah (smiling) with (name of student). We have written a very good assignment for qualitative, we got 5 (saying it with a lot of proud).

P16	I got 4. (laughing)
P15	We got 5 (saying it with a lot of proud) in that assignment, but also working...
Interviewer	Why do you think it worked better?
P15	It worked better because...
P16	Because she can communicate with (name of student). (laughing)
P15	No, not only that. First, they were, (name of student) is a very. She is from my cohort, so she is from Educational Leadership and we are talking and it's, as I mentioned before, it's not only being valuable or not, but also being responsible. So, we sit together, we talked about the structure, I have done my part, she did her part and then we connected everything together and it went very well. It was efficient and but, as I mentioned before, I rely on the responsibility of people. So, if in front of me I have a person who is willing to do his job at all, it went everything very well. (P16 starting to talk at the same time) But also the course...
P16	You also have to set deadlines...
P15	Yeah.
P16	Because I am the person that can't left everything for last minute, I can't, I can't. When I have three months in front of me, I want to finish everything, bom bom bom, it's done. So, when I have group works, I am setting, all of us, set the deadlines all the time.
P15	Yeah, the others were a little bit better and it was very pleasant to work, but as I told you (addressing interviewer), I changed strategies. So, I was trying to find people and asking, yeah... 'Can you please work with me?'. So,.. (laughing).
P16	But, they don't (P15 starting to talk at the same time) have to mix...
P15	No, no... do you remember what we have done...
P16	Bachelor's with Master's.
P15	Come on, that's, that's, that's, that was horrible for me.
Interviewer	In previous discussions I've talked a bit about plagiarism because there were cases where you had group work, you had to write something together and if you get to know people, you kind of know their writing style a bit and you can maybe realize 'Hey, this sounds better than expected.' Had you cases of like where you noticed plagiarism within a group or any kind of complications which are kind of "unethical" in your mind.
P16	I had a problem because in quantitative. Ok, the course was awful, awful, we understood and learned nothing. So, at the end some classmates of us asked permission to do a private class with us, to explain to us what is SPSS and what is

	quantitative.
Interviewer	So, like peer support.
P16	Yeah.
P15	Yeah, peer support.
P16	And we worked in this class with, we were four, and we were working on the same assignment because quantitative: same data, same questions, everything the same. So we work on that and because we didn't know how to paraphrase the report, we submit the same answers, but it wasn't individual, it wasn't a group work, we collaborate because we didn't know how to do it and after all, we received an email that you have done a fraud and you can have a counsellor and you will pass a hearing and at the end, we have to do again the assignment with new data, new questions. But it's university's fault because you don't know, you didn't do a good class, you gave permission for extra class from our classmates. So, that was the only thing.
Interviewer	But was there any like big consequences for you in the end besides like...
P16	We had to do it again. But I don't know how to do it.
Interviewer	Did you explain that to them that...
P16	Yeah, yeah we explained that and we said that we collaborated, we didn't cheat or something, not at all. We did it together and and because we, ok and we will be stupid if we submit the same, stupidity. We submitted the same because we didn't know how to do it. Otherwise, but otherwise I don't think that we have any...
P15	Öhm, actually I had an experience but because I wasn't sure that the writing was.... Yeah, it's something you read and you not expect and probably in that particular case we decided to not include in our assignment and to do by our own. So,...
P16	I also know some people who check their assignments with a native speaker or something like that. Their idea but they modify a bit the English, yeah.
P15	The English. Edited by a native speaker.
P16	Which I don't think is ethical, not at all, in a way, I am not doing it, so I don't care. (Looking at P15) Come on, it's not difficult.
P15	Yeah, that's true.
Interviewer	Ok, we have talked about this already a bit, about the difficulties you have and how they support your work here. So, I will quote a lady called Pecorari, she says that 'Ideally, academic support should be constructed around the needs of the student.' (P15 nodding) So, to what extent have you been supported for your academic work here at JYU. You have talked about this already a bit, for example that there is a mismatch between the course offered by the language center and the programme here (P15 nodding) and so, in what ways are you satisfied with support you receive,

	are you satisfied?
P16	Yes, I am, I am, I am. I am from the teachers because for example for my thesis. I was thinking about my proposal, my supervisor is T12, I went to T6, I went to T4. All of them, they advised me. They are very supp..., without an appointment, they are very supportive.
Interviewer	But, it's like you are very proactive in reaching out.
P16	Yeah.
P15	But also from very, for example what C2 did to manage the situation with quantitative, you know? Because a lot of students had the difficulty of doing that assignment. So, this is true that the idea to help other students, the idea came from us, but what she did like support that peer session and you know...
P16	C2 is working very good.
P15	There was trying to manage the situation.
P16	But (very loudly) on the other (P15 slightly laughing), C1 is doing nothing.
P15	In the beginning of the... this coordinator (still laughing).
P16	Yeah, ok, but C2 send us an email (P15: Probably it will take time) like one and a half month ago. This is the new programme for Educational Sciences. I was thinking 'Ok, the Leadership will come from C1 tomorrow.' It came like a week ago. It's like.... (making movements of imbalance)
P15	But probably the...
P16	It was the...
P15	As I understood, no I am not, because I don't want to say something and say something pro C1 because he can do it by himself, but as I understood there was two different sessions to approve the curricula. (P16 talking at the same time: Yeah, ok. He is not supportive, come one he has this Finnish face all the time) So, there was a session to approve the curriculum... I am saying what I know, you know? There were two different sessions to approve the curricula for social sciences and the curricula for educational leadership.
P16	Ok, but still, he is very Finnish.
P15	I can...
P16	He is very Finnish. No, I am not saying in a bad way, C2 is Finnish as well, but she is trying, she is trying. C1 is very... (making hand movements of distance).
P15	C2 has a little bit more experience, has worked a lot with...

P16	Yeah, for sure.
P15	... with T3.
P16	I mean in "Lettu" (event as a whole cohort making pancakes), it was the first time that C1 talked to us and he was smiling and otherwise in the University, he is (making robot-ly noises) 'I am your coordinator now.' He is like that, I think that, which is not supportive and also that, the departments they have to communicate better. You cannot have research seminar one and at the same you have to write the literature review. Seminar one, annotated bibliography. Seminar two, literature review, support, together.
Interviewer	So, the different kind of support they are offering to you, should be more connected.
P16	Yeah. On the first semester, T1 asked us annotated bibliography. I am coming from a different background, social anthropology. I have no idea about education, about leadership, nothing. It's my first semester here (P15: No, but..), I am trying to see what's going on. Annotated bibliography. Why? That wasn't very helpful, why didn't you help me? Because I didn't, I picked the articles with photos, less pages to do it cause I didn't know my topic, I had no idea.
Interviewer	Cause you also have a totally different study background.
P16	Yeah, so help me with that. Because now with thesis proposal, now is the time to read the articles, support the literature and annotated bibliography now and the next semester, research seminar two, where we'll have to submit like 10 pages for our thesis, tell us to write the literature review. All together.
P15	Yeah, as we mentioned before, it should it should be coordinated a little bit better.
P16	Yeah, and I know from other courses like Sports Psychology, they do great job. I have a friend from Sports Psychology, who is writing her thesis like she is writing, I don't know, a letter to her mother and because I know how to do it because the qualitative and the quantitative was combined with academic reading and writing and the thesis...
P15	Yeah.
P16	So, they...
P15	It's a matter of coordination.
P16	She is writing her thesis like a....
P15	I mentioned that, it's, we have talked about that. We have talked also with T1. I talked to her and I said to her and probably she was a little bit mad with me because I got a three (laughing).
P16	(name of student) has problem as well, she just texted.
Interviewer	Oh, no.



P15	I said her my opinion. I said, for me it's not coordinated very well. She said 'I have this curricula from the university.' Yeah, I know.
P16	And also the teacher. Ok, the good thing is, here that students have power. So, if they don't like something, they can say it.
P15	Yeah, that's...
P16	That's very good, that's very good. And we give all of our cohort, there is bad feedback for T1's class and for quantitative.
Interviewer	Ok, when you think about your own academic skills. Do you think they have developed further throughout these courses, which are offered like even when it comes to reading in English, writing in English, being able to quote, referencing...
P16	Yeah, for sure, for sure. For sure, but still not T1's class helped me. It was the reading and writing, writing (P15 slightly laughing). No, she didn't help me... , she didn't explain to me.
P15	Yeah, I know, I know but we are still stuck there.
P16	No, but that's the course (P15: I know, I know. We have talked a little bit.) that she, it will teach me, how to cite and how to do references. She did nothing. I did it alone, I had no idea.
Interviewer	So, you were very individual, independent...
P16	Yes, yes. I had no idea. But I think I have improved. I feel that I need more, for sure, especially with my English (P15: Yeah.), but from the beginning to now, my writing especially, it's... and my reading, I am a quick reader.
P15	But also, not only writing and reading, but the fact that most of the courses are introducing to us other authors to read. So probably, it expanded let's say my area of reading authors that I haven't heard before and having the opportunity to select this articles, authors, and but I think that my reading is also expanded in other areas also.
P16	Going back, sorry. Some people have problem with these deadlines. There are no deadlines. You have to be very self-disciplined to follow the deadlines. There are...
P15	Yeah.
P16	... he has to do like 9 essays right now because he took extension, extension. So, that's not good.
Interviewer	So, it's very easy to get an extension.
P16	Yes, and the University doesn't help because you are coming, ok, it is about self-discipline of course, but still when we are telling about it the deadline, let's keep this deadline.

P15	I think this is good. This is good, you know to have the opportunity...
P16	Because you have self-discipline.
P15	It's not about that, it's not about that.
P16	Because you have self-discipline.
P15	But also these deadlines, they help your self-discipline, you know. Still talking about being...
P16	Yeah, but...
P15	... responsible. Being responsible it means that you are doing things for you...
P16	Yeah, but...
P15	... if you follow the deadlines.
P16	... for example, however, once you understood that deadlines doesn't matter, you do nothing (laughing). I will take extension to here and there, so... it's about self-discipline.
Interviewer	So, the motivation basically went down after realizing ...
P16	Yeah, because you know that you can submit it in two years as well. You know that.
P15	But, there is another point of view and which is mine like if I can have a little bit more time to write better, it's not only...
P16	Yeah, I understand that...
P15	It's my opinion, you know? If I could have some more time for many reasons, you know... overload work or you have other deadlines or it can be period down...
P16	Yeah, I understand that.
P15	... so, it's not only, you are not, especially at the end of the academic year, you are not more so efficient. I am talking about myself, not about others. So efficient like September or January for example. So, if I could have a little bit more time to write down a better essay, why not? So, I will use this extension for helping me to write a little bit better.
Interviewer	To feel confident that you have submitted something good.
P15	Yeah.
Interviewer	So, you have talked a little bit about this that you feel that there is a lack of coordination.
P15	Yeah.

P16	Yes.
Interviewer	So, if you could recommend something to the faculty on how to improve this or any other thing you would like to see better in that sense or better supported, what would you like to or how would you like to see it?
P15	As I have mentioned before, there are courses offered outside of Faculty of Education. So, better coordination is needed as we mentioned language center, but...
P16	Yeah.
P15	... I can tell other departments. If there is any opportunity to coordinate them better if they are inside of a like a thesis process for example, there are courses related to each other and connected to each other, so it's better to have this. And of course, I still insist in this group work and the students coming from different background and different experience and different person and individual style of working and if you want me to be honest after all these years of studies, what, my point of view is totally different from a Bachelor, ok, or from an exchange student, also Bachelor. So, it's not because they are exchange, but because of their experience. So, it is nothing related to the fact that they (P16: Yeah.) are exchange students, but for them it's the first experience, they are Bachelor level. So, they can benefit from me, maybe you are saying 'Oh, she is a little bit modest.', but I am talking about my experience. So, the question is, I expect also to learn from them, but at this point, I cannot learn anything from them.
P16	I have the same: better communication between the departments, especially the language center and our department. And, I don't know and also that the courses are too short, they have to do something (P15: Yeah, yeah mentioned the lengths.), I don't know from the curriculum.
Interviewer	Within the quantitative course you mentioned that you actually were not aware of what you were supposed to do throughout.
P15	Yeah, yeah.
Interviewer	So, the expectations were not maybe clearly communicated to you?
P16	Maybe, maybe about the (P15: Yeah, yeah, it was...) methodology, maybe it's better...
P15	It was about deductic than pedagogy, I think that they weren't able to teach from my teacher point of course.
P16	Yeah. Or maybe it's better if I am interested in doing qualitative to do qualitative and not quantitative. Because I have no...
Interviewer	So, a selection.
P16	Yeah. It's better for me to deepening qualitative instead of spending hours and freaking out with quantitative

P15	Yeah, being compulsory. So, probably, it should have been better...
P16	I think they have change the...
P15	If I am going to do a quantitative research (P16: Yeah, help me with that.), I can have compulsory quantitative, but also I can have the opportunity to choose qualitative. But, if I am going the qualitative, of course it would have been better to have a compulsory in qualitative and also the opportunity to choose quantitative. So, the other way around.
P16	And also, there was some courses like Educational Research. Nothing. I have learned nothing, 5 ECTS, I got 5 doing nothing. So, it, the ECTS it is not equal with the work load.
P15	Yeah.
P16	And this Educational Research, you (addressing P15) didn't take that course. We observed like some presentation.
Interviewer	People have to take this course who have no education background in their studies, that's...
P16	No, not this one. It was from methodological...
Interviewer	Ah, ok. Different.
P16	We observed some presentations and there were like five groups: special needs, five groups, without leadership inside. You have Master's in Leadership and you don't have a presentation on leadership? What about me? I don't care about guidance, I don't care about anything else. So, I was there. The task was to reflect on what we learned. I learned nothing again because I was not interested (P15 slightly laughing) in vocational school in Finland. No, sorry. I learned the big picture, but otherwise I wasn't interested in details.
Interviewer	So, basically your needs were not represented.
P16	No, not at all. I am in Leadership Master's, why you don't have it... that was part of my feedback and the teacher told me that she didn't find any researcher to present leadership because T7 wasn't here (etc.), but still, you have a Master's in Leadership, what are you doing? Only special needs? Not all need special needs in the teaching. I am not a teacher. Why all the focus is on teaching and student and whatever? What about the big picture of the school? That's what I have faced.
Interviewer	So, that's the last part basically where I am going to ask you if you felt that anything was missing throughout...
P16	Yeah, the light, the sun (laughing).
Interviewer	I mean throughout this discussion right now.

P16	Ah, no.
Interviewer	Is there anything you would like to add to the mix what I have been talking about or you have been talking about basically?
P16	No, I don't think so.
P15	Yeah, yeah. I had this other experience of yeah, 325 course. It was Ethical and Responsible Leadership...
P16	And the teacher was a racist.
P15	Yeah (short laugh).
Interviewer	The teacher was a racist?
P15 & P16	Yeah.
Interviewer	Can you elaborate?
P15	Yeah.
P16	You (addressing P15) remember because...
P15	Yeah, I remember that.
P16	We, the Westerns, we have to give civilization...
P15	No, we have our, we have our philosophers, but you Chinese people and in this Chinese people, she included every Asian and you Chinese people, you have your own philosophers and she mentioned Kung Fu and in my mind came Kung Fu Panda (laughing).
P16	(removed for anonymity reasons)
P15	But you cannot, you cannot understand, there were like South Korean, Japanese and to call...
Interviewer	The teacher might have needed some intercultural communication course.
P16	(making movements of agreement).
P15	And to call a Japanese, a Chinese is a big issue. These countries can have a war for that, you know. (laughing)
P16	And we can help them. We can help them. We can sell our civilization something, we can civilize them. I t was like that. And, also what I didn't like...
P15	No, teaching ethic, she was teaching ethic (looking at interviewer).
P16	Yeah.

P15	You know? And called everybody, called everybody...
P16	They will not have her next year because the feedback was like... all the cohort...
P15	Called everybody Chinese.
P16	Yeah, I am not Chinese because (puts hands on eyes) (laughing).
P15	'You Chinese people.' All Asian people, Chinese people. Then in these Chinese people are included more than half of the population of the world (laughing).
P16	And also the thing that I didn't like...
P15	And the philosopher was the Kung Fu and I was... Kung Fu Panda.
P16	I am not the one, who judge the English, not at all, but she was an English teacher and in our assignments, she correct our English mistakes (P15: I was, I was..), I was so pissed. Because you are not native, I am not native, please. Please check my ideas.
P15	It was also difficult for me because when I went to see my papers and what I would have liked to see, some feedback, written feedback and she hadn't written nothing there. She marked the first question with three, second question with three, but there was nothing to read like..
Interviewer	The same course still?
P15	Yeah.
Interviewer	So, no like actual reason on why...
P15	Not. Yeah. Not why I got that grade.
Interviewer	Ok, did you figure out later on or...
P15	No. I am going to retake that course. (P16 rolling her eyes). It's unbelievable.
P16	Ok, do whatever you want.
P15	I wrote an essay about my failures, and she marked it with, she graded that with three.
P16	Me as well.
Interviewer	It's very personal.
P15	I was like '(making sounds of negative surprise?)'.
P16	Why? Because I have my evaluation was one paragraph, two paragraph, three paragraph and all the others was (?). Anyway...
P15	And the feedback was corrected my English of course and because you are repeating

	yourself, but it's normal that I am repeating myself because it's me.
P16	So, anyway. She will not teach again, don't worry.
P15	No, it's not about that, It's about the fact that...
P16	Come one, you got a three, it's ok. P15!
P15	Ethical and Responsible Leadership...
P16	You are not difficult, come one!
P15	(speaking very loudly) I wrote an essay about my values and she graded with three (sounding very upset) and gave me feedback like 'Ok, you haven't used so much references.', but when you talk about your values, it's not about referencing the others.
P16	I agree, I agree.
P15	It's not about my English, it's not about I got tired, I got confused because you are repeating yourself. Yeah, because these are my values. And those are not criteria to mark.
P16	Sorry (saying it to the interviewer). Shhhh! (saying it to P15).
P15	And I am a teacher, and I am a teacher.
P16	New suggestions. First, they ask. We had a book exam after Christmas break. Come on, it was too much the first semester for us. After the Christmas break, a class from the previous semester, please not again. This. And the second, don't put PhD students to do what they don't know to do it. Quantitative (may refer to qualitative) it was a PhD student. I don't have any problem with a PhD student, but if they don't know the topic, if they don't know how to teach, don't let them teach.
P15	In that course, I wasn't Asian people, but I felt little bit insulted from her, you know. Offended.
P16	Really?
P15	Come one. You can't call everybody Chinese people. I am not a Chinese, I am not a Asian, but when I listen to her, I was like...
P16	I wasn't listening.
P15	What, what...
P16	I had my (making hand movements of having headphones in), I was watching I think X-Factor or something like that.
P15	... (continuing her sentence, not a reaction to what P16 said) what the hell.

Interviewer	Ok.
P16	You don't have to mention that. (P15 and P16 laughing)
Interviewer	This is...
P15	Come on. But if you have in mind Kung Fu Panda, remember the philosopher.
Interviewer	I don't remember the name, but we had the same lecturer.
P16	T13? Really?
Interviewer	I will tell you afterwards maybe.  Ähm, one of the questions which one in the first group had and I asked this throughout every group now, the person wanted to ask: Are you finishing your thesis in time? You are still first year students, but I can still ask you. Do you think you are going to finish your thesis in time? Which basically means next Spring.
P16	Look, I don't want to spend a day more in Finland. For sure. And I want, after the two years, go back to (home country P16) in order to cut the school year to start working. So, if I extend my thesis process... ok, the bad thing is that they have a lot of courses here, so yes you have the second year "free", but no it's not free because you can have a minor in business, courses are all around, they are very interesting. So,...
Interviewer	... it depends...
P16	It depends. But I will try to finish my thesis on time. Maybe I will spend the summer like next year here to finish it, but yeah September max.
P15	I plan also the same, but for a different reason. Probably I am going to apply for a PhD position, but not here.
P16	Why? You didn't like Jyväskylä?
P15 & P16	(laughing)
P15	Come on!
Interviewer	In Finland or outside Finland?
P15	Most probably outside of Finland, but I am open for the opportunity. This is true and..
P16	Why outside Finland?
P15	And for me...  There are different reasons, but one main reason of course it will be my area of research, which is higher education. This is true. But also it will depend if a position is funded or not. (P16: Ok, Yeah, of course) So, there are two criteria. So, I plan to finish



	ot as soon as possible because it will help with the application for PhD.
Interviewer	Thank you.