

Pair Interview 6

<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 - in this case the University of Jyväskylä. Well, you know my name... my name is Christine Niemi and I am a Master's degree student in the Educational Leadership programme.</p> <p>As an international student in an international programme, we.. (information on P12's nationality) (P12: Yeah, yeah; slightly laughing) 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 the University 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 the students.</p> <p>The focus group discussion should not last longer than an hour. So, we should be done by 2ish. Please note that the session is video-and audio-recorded. You have signed informed the consent sheet and yeah, let's start.</p> <p>So, as part of the student group here at the University you represent kind of a very large and rich group of students, you bring a variety of teaching backgrounds, motivations and experiences with you. So, my set of questions is related to how you manager your studies here at the University, how would you describe your study experiences so far, what has gone well and what has been difficult.</p> <p>I will repeat this in the moment, I will just give you both a bit of background on who you are 'cause I don't know if you know each other.</p>
<p>P11</p>	<p>I know your name but that's basically it.</p>
<p>P12</p>	<p>Yeah.</p>
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Ok, so we have P11, he is (nationality P11), his first language is (mother tongue P11) as well, he is currently second year student in the Educational programme, Educational Sciences. You have completed a Bachelor's programme back home or in (ESL environment), not home country)?</p>

P11	In (town), yes.
Interviewer	In (ESL environment, not home country), but all in (mother tongue P11) and you have submitted a Thesis in (mother tongue P11).
P11	Two theses, but yeah.
Interviewer	Two? How come?
P11	There were two, one more theoretical thesis and one involving a data collection.
Interviewer	And then we have P12 and P12 is (nationality P12), her first language is (mother tongue P12). You are a second year student in the Educational Leadership programme and you have a done a Bachelor's in (mother tongue P12)?
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	All in (mother tongue P12), ok. (...) at (name of university).
P12	Yes.
Interviewer	And then you said...
P12	Yeah, I had a one year, when I studied Master's level studies (location of university). Some of the courses were English and some of the courses were in (mother tongue P12). And after that I, well during that year I was accepted to this programme.
Interviewer	So, first you studied the Master's in (mother tongue P12), but some courses were in English as well and then you got accepted to the international programme.
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	Ok, and now we come back to the questions I had. How do you manage your studies, how would you describe your study experiences so far, what has gone well and what has been difficult.
P11	How do I manage my studies? (short pause) Well, studying full time without like working on the side. I didn't feel it was very challenging or very yeah time-consuming or anything. So, yeah if you don't do anything else, I feel it's super easy to be honest, super easy and very easy-going and yeah.
Interviewer	Why would you describe it as easy-going?
P11	I don't feel that the expectations for passing courses and getting good grades are very high here compared to what I am used to anyway. And yeah, so that's how I felt the past two years. (laughing)
Interviewer	What do you think has been going good considering it was so easy or less time-consuming, was it ok for you or was it rather...
P11	It was ok, it was kind of underwhelming in a way also because I expected much,

	<p>much, much more before I came here. I thought it would be very rigid, very strict, very strict you know in a scientifically relevant way whereas the reality is more like, that we all can give our opinions based on our experiences, but it's not necessarily related to an academically relevant context. Very often anyway. Not always, but very often, which is great because we get to hear lots of opinions and lots of experiences, lots of like impressions from different cultures and different countries and different people. That's very positive and I cannot stress enough how important that is, but on the other hand it's also a bit frustrating and a bit, yeah a bit frustrating that it happens like on a kind of bar talk level, if you know what I mean. And everybody is right in a way and there is like, we don't have any standards by which we are kind of assessed or "measured" like even if an opinion is valid or not. So, that's what really bothers me. Yeah, I don't know if it is the same in your programme, but I assume it's kind of similar in a way.</p>
Interviewer	What do you (addressing P12) think?
P12	Well, I think we have a lot of opinions and experiences and maybe even stories about how things are done in different countries and it is more, I think it's like T4 once or twice has said it's learning as in, you learn from other people's experiences (P11 nodding) and how things are done in different contexts, so you can have ideas how to, that you could try this or that in your own context or school or in country and then, or you can say, see that 'Ok, this doesn't work that well.', so what could work and give you ideas....
P11	Yeah.
P12	... what could work and what could you do better or different.
Interviewer	So, P11 described this as a bit frustrating. How would you describe it 'cause you are (nationality P12) and maybe a bit because I think continuous learning is an aspect in Finnish education which is quite emphasized and critical thinking (both agreeing). Then, there are many opinions coming into place...
P12	Yeah. I never feel, see that as frustrating, I think I see more like ok, like exchange of opinions and ideas (P11: Yeah.), which can enhance learning and new ideas and different ideas and aspects (P11: Yeah.) of what could be done and what could be done differently or better,
P11	Yeah. What makes it so frustrating for me in particular is, the way feedback is given here, which I think is like deeply connected to the Finnish like way of communicating, I guess because I have to know if I write a, mess up in an essay or my presentation is shit, I have to know. I have to get feedback and I feel like people give shitty presentations and then the lecturer says 'Oh yeah, thank you for your contribution today, it was very interesting.' I am in the audience and I don't know, do I have to cross check everything the guy just said or you know, what to take form it very difficult for me.
P12	Ok, yeah I think, yeah I think I see, you wanna have accurate (P11: Yes.) plus and minus whether you, what did you like.. Ok, from the teacher that you did this good and

	this was good and this was shitty or bad.
P11	Yeah, exactly.
Interviewer	What could be improved.
P12	Yeah.
P11	Especially like in terms of like is it actually, you know, "scientifically" relevant, it is... people like don't distinguish between (Interviewer: experiences) 'I got this from an article or this is my opinion.', you know? And this is important for an academic discourse and that's what lacking a bit here.
P12	So, you wanna have very accurate (P11: Yeah.), detailed (P11: Yeah.) feedback.
P11	And I want the people like having an opinion is nice and expressing the opinion is nice, but is there like, what's your rationale behind your opinion, that's what I want to know. Not just saying 'Ähm I don't know, I don't think math should be taught in higher education, äh in primary education, sorry secondary education. It should be free for, it should be a choice to learn that.' I am like 'Why? How do you like... where is your reason behind that? Just because you are not good at math or I don't know.' Stuff like that.'
P12	Yeah, I think, well some teachers from my experience I can say that ok, some teachers just send something like 'Ok you got... ', well, I have had this kind of experiences, teachers sending 'Ok, you get from the exam or presentation, ok you got this grade.' and then there is not much like written feedback, but some teachers have like written feedback on a like group presentation. 'Ok, your group, this was very good or this was good and this was not so good, but well there is still like university teachers at least who don't give that much (check phone recording) than written feedback that would actually tell 'Ok, what did I do good or where did I do good or excellent (P11 agreeing) and where did I do not that good.' So, there is differences between teachers and lecturers (P11: Yeah.) and like how much and in what way they give feedback to the students (P11: yeah.) and I think also... yes, there is like there can be like group feedback, but then individual feedback can be... Ok, if group presentation for example, it's kind of hard to know who did what (P11 agreeing) and then it's not so necessarily easy to give individual feedback (P11 agreeing).
Interviewer	When you think about what P11 said in the beginning, that for him it has been really easy going through the programme considering it's very easy going, would you say the same? Has it been challenging for you in different aspects or?
P12	It hasn't been that easy because it has been more getting used to the writing, writing essays more, more than I have used to before. So, in my previous studies, it was more... well, there was essays, but it was also like I could do, there was more than one course that I just read couple of books and then went to do an exam, which was like, it was written by hand and without essay, assign... answers, then it was like, it wasn't that many pages.

Interviewer	Ok, so now it has increased in page numbers and everything is in English.
P12	Yeah. Well, that has probably also little bit made it challenging in its part. I don't think, well English hasn't that much been difficult for me since, well I have like couple of few years watched television programmes in English, well American television programmes from Internet without subtitles and so speaking English is not that difficult, but maybe the like accurate (P11: Yeah.) grammatic kind of things.
P11	Like in a proper thesis or something.
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	Academic writing.
P12	Yeah, like academic writing can be a bit tricky, like well since grammatic things like that. Writing English is not necessarily in itself, it's not difficult.
P11	Yeah.
P12	But, yeah of course teachers have different like kind of views of how accurate grammatic kind of things...
Interviewer	... need to be.
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	Ok. Since (taken out for anonymity reasons), but just thinking about... how did the previous experiences, your higher education experiences, prepared you to be a student here, like did it help, did it prepare you, did it complicate things from a comparing perspective?
P11	I wouldn't necessarily say complicated, but my previous programme was pretty rigid like considering that we were hundreds of students in one cohort. So, everything was like organized very strictly and if you missed the deadline, it's your bad. If you miss here a deadline: 'Can I get two more days?', 'Yeah, sure, here is two weeks', stuff like that and so you have to be like on time with your stuff and there wasn't much contact with the lecturers or professors, so you had to learn by your own, you went to the lectures and the rest you learned by your own, by your own learning and yeah, so you had to also the stuff you wrote and in the exams, you had to be like strict and on point and it was much more like acquiring knowledge than it was here. So, learning the basics basically, which I guess kind of prepared me for this Master's degree programme very well I would say. That's maybe part of the reason why it's easier for me than for others because we have a lot of people with different backgrounds and they obviously like lack some basics that are easy for me to know of course because I know them, but not for others and so in that sense, it probably prepared me very well. Yeah, the way of passing courses here, writing essays and communicating with each other is very, very different than I had, and I had to get used to that. It's very,... very weird that the way we write essays here and it was something I wasn't familiar with.
Interviewer	Why was it weird?

P11	Because you give your own opinions and experiences and that's not something that was appreciated in my previous programme a lot because you had to, somebody writes their opinion, fine, but you have to back it up with solid sources and even then stating your opinion is kind of... you are writing an academic paper, there is no place for your opinion or your personal opinion, that's like.. Yeah. So, that was kind of weird for me at the beginning, but now, by now I am quite used to it.
Interviewer	So, some adaptation process.
P11	Yeah.
P12	So, you have to go from like very objective (P11: Yes!) to like I can express my opinions if I want to.
P11	Yeah, yeah (smiling), exactly.
Interviewer	What about you (addressing P12)? Do you think it has supported your previous studies here in Finland?
P12	Well, to some extent probably yes. Of course the like what I said earlier like writing essays, to more writing essays than going to exams (P11 nodding) was, might have been like little bit adjustment process and well, of course the writing in English was, well.. Actually now that I think, not the writing in English necessarily, but writing as much.
Interviewer	Yeah, the page numbers..
P12	Yeah, page numbers and like...
Interviewer	What was, how much did you need to write in your previous degree? Like, what was the maximum amount you ever had to write, do you remember?
P12	Not exactly. Well, my Bachelor's thesis was about 30 or 35 pages, 30 to 40 pages. So, that was like one of the biggest. Then we had, our essays were like 10 pages, at least I remember that was some essay that were like 10 or 15 pages. But yeah, but it's, well you get used to, you get used to a lot of things and you are now in a last academic year when I had like three guidance and counselling courses, two of them had like essays that had to be like 10 to 12 pages and one had, the third one had to be like 15 pages or so, so it was like, it was, it's still a little bit difficult or challenging to get started to writing an essay, but then when you finally get to the point, get to the finish line and you are just 'Ok, I wrote this, this much.' and it's ok and you send it to the teacher.
Interviewer	Ok, since we have talked now a bit about essays already. Often as part of a course you write an essay at the end, in an academic format and this is referred to academic writing, I will give you this paper, but I will read it out also. This is related to the thesis and there is a quote from the University website. So, there is a so-called final project to conduct a small-scale research and write your Master's thesis, supervised by professors and senior lecturers. The thesis topics are related to the research areas of

	<p>the Faculty of Education. The thesis process is supported by research method courses, research seminars and individual supervision. So, basically over the next few questions I am gonna ask you, the first part is related to individual experiences on assignments or anything you would like to talk about and then group work experiences and then we go into the support measures, which are mentioned here in this quote. So, the first set of questions is related to individual assignments. How do you approach a given assignment? And could you think of an example of an assignment you were pleased with and why? And was there one example where you were disappointed with and why?</p>
P12	<p>Well, my guidance and counselling courses, we get kind of to decide or propose, we make proposals for our topic of essay and then we send it for approval to T8 and he sends his feedback or saying most, well most of the times it's like 'Ok, you can start writing.' or then he might comment 'Ok, could you maybe little bit modify this. So, you could write about this or that or that.'</p>
Interviewer	<p>But not every lecturer does that.</p>
P12	<p>Yeah, not every lecturer. So, I think it's more like, he wants to know what we are going to write and kind of, it's probably also kind of support that 'Ok, you can write this. I'll be (check from phone recording) your essay. Good luck for your writing.'</p>
P11	<p>Yeah, it's funny that you say that because the only time that happened to me, we kind of had to propose a topic and kind of write a page or, you know, short abstract, what we planned to write was in the Multicultural Guidance and Counselling class and all the other classes I didn't have to do that.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And that course is originally also by T8.</p>
P11, P12	<p>Yeah.</p>
P12	<p>Yeah, I think T8 has, I don't know, I think T8 has this kind of, he wants to know, so that he can prepare and also like, he wants to know that, see that we have some kind of, that we have found for example sources (P11: Yeah.) that can or hopefully help and that we can use to our best of ability.</p>
P11	<p>What was your first question? How we decide on topics?</p>
Interviewer	<p>No, how do you approach a given assignment. Not necessarily related to...</p>
P11	<p>Ok, yeah.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Yeah. But, I think that would be one approach that the lecturer asks you actually for a proposal.</p>
P11, P12	<p>Yeah.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But usually I think, what I have heard in the previous discussions, there is not, this is the first time someone tells that actually, so.</p>

P11	Yeah and as I said, it only was in one course for me and in all the other courses we are really pretty free in to decide what we write about.
P12	Yeah, and we don't have to like tell most of the teachers don't, we don't have to tell what we are gonna write (P11 agreeing), we just... well, there might be like some title or, and then we just have to write something to that, that's suitable for the title. But sometimes we can just given area of that we have to write.
Interviewer	Which way do you (addressing P12) prefer?
P12	I don't know. It's kind of like, probably depends on the topic, but I kind of like it that we get to decide our topic, but it's also like, I appreciate that T8 takes time to review like our topic and proposal of essay and then just gives feedback and just say 'Ok, you can start writing.' and it's kind of, yeah...
Interviewer	What about you (addressing P11)? Would you have liked to see this more that you propose something or is it...
P11	I feel like many people need it and like it, I don't need it that much really because usually the way I do it, is I find something that like interests me in particular about the course or you know and write about that or I try to find like, when there is like, I don't know a certain discourse or discussion within that area that's kind of "not solved" or there is like different opinions and different studies and everything and then I kind of try to write, kind of around that. Yeah, usually I just try to find something that interests me and that's also, I don't really have an example for an essay that I was like disappointed with or not happy with. But I also have that kind of self-expectation for myself to, when I write and submit something that it should be good and that I take the time to do it properly and don't submit something half-assed or something, I can't do that. (laughing) And yeah, so usually I am happy when I submit something, I know it will be good grade and even though grade is kind of secondary for me, but still it reflects somehow that I have done a good job I guess. And yeah, there was maybe one example, I had a class with T11, (name of course), that <i>I just did not get the purpose of that class</i> and I, until today, I just don't get it how that helps to make education better in any way, to do that what we did in that class, I don't get it and that also kind of reflected in my essay, which was maybe the only one that I wasn't like really happy with. But, yeah.
Interviewer	What about you (addressing P12)?
P12	I have had a couple of essays that I haven't been so happy and I haven't got that good grade. From the courses I got threes, which is ok, but I think I had a bit difficulties to, well there was kind of that I would have to have experience from the area of kind of, area of expertise from that subject matter or just more knowledge about that, how to for example financial aspect of Finnish education works to write a good essay and well probably some kind of work...
Interviewer	... experience.
P12	Yeah, work experience would have helped to write a better essay that would have like

	more concrete aspects for that.
Interviewer	Did you get feedback on why you got a lower grade than you expected?
P12	Well, I don't know if I expected. I didn't expect that good grade because I knew that 'Ok, this is not my best work.' Of course there was feedback like written. Yeah.
Interviewer	So, you think that your lack of experience may have influenced...
P12	Well, that and maybe I just, I don't know if I understood everything like correctly or to the point, what was expected in an essay to be written.
Interviewer	We continue with this kind of academic work, but now in the context of group work. So, that's something we do quite a lot here at this university, almost in every course I think.
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	So, similar questions. How do you approach a group work assignment? Can you think of an assignment you were pleased with and one you were disappointed with, when it comes to group work. (P12 laughing)
P11	I have terrible experiences with group work here, horrible. I hated it and I am always happy when there is no group work involved in the course, but it's so stressful and so annoying and so time-consuming and so exhausting to get like people on board with a topic that everybody agrees with and then to distribute work and make sure everybody does their share. Usually it ends up being like two people out of five who do all the work and the rest don't even bother or don't even show up for group meetings or I don't know. And that's my experience and I have to say, group work experience has consistently been very, very bad here, very bad. So frustrating.
Interviewer	So, frustrating! Ok!
P11	Wow (laughing).
Interviewer	What do you think is like people are not coming together, why do you think there is different levels of motivation.
P11	I don't know, hard to say, hard to say. It depends on the individual case and on the individual group. Yeah, I can't tell why people don't show up, I don't know.
P12	And probably group dynamics.
P11	Yeah, group dynamics (saying it rather unconvincing), of course like communication issues between (Interviewer: People.) and there is cultural issues definitely.
Interviewer	What kind of cultural issues?
P11	I don't know, I am (nationality P11), I show up when we have a meeting, you know what I mean?

P12	Yeah, you have like (making hand movement to show "order").
P11	I show up on time. Like 'What the hell, how can you not show up?' when you schedule a meeting, you are messing with everybody's schedule and everybody's time. How dare you? (laughing)
P12	So, you have, you expect that everyone are on time and have done, do their job and do their share of work.
P11	Yeah, I don't even care like if somebody like hasn't done their things or as long as you talk about it, like I don't care so much, but yeah. Not responding to emails, not showing up like not getting involved whatsoever, how is that supposed to work. Yeah.
Interviewer	So, that was a very frustrating case.
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	What about you P12? (both laughing)
P12	Well, I have done group work which has mostly been... ok, there is some cases that have been a little fast I think because for example at the beginning of the programme, it was like I didn't always understand everyone's English, I can tell you that. Honestly that...
Interviewer	Different accents.
P12	Yeah, the different accents and different kind of way of pronouncing words were like a little bit like confusing and but you get used to it that too and then it's, now it's easier. Of course there is like sometimes can be, people can be late, which can be a little bit annoying, but mostly it's pretty, quite positive like we have gone, gotten good grade and the group work has been done on time.
Interviewer	In previous groups we had the discussion about grades that 'Ok, you get a good grade, but does it reflect really the work as a group you've done?' (slight head shaking by P11)
P12	Well, there was this one group work and our group got 4 or 5 and I think it was, well I found 4 good grade. So, I was happy with it and I just thought 'Ok, we got 4, it's ok.' and well actually the teacher had, there was four groups and the teacher had given 4 or 5 to all groups. So it was 'Ok, this, ok maybe it's a...' Well, I think the teacher liked our, appreciated our group that much, but what can I say? It was a little bit different than the rest of the group works and well, it's just...
P11	One thing that has been very frustrating for me is, it also relates to language issues and people being very hesitant to actually contribute, in terms of giving an opinion or giving like kind of directing the work process into some direction or giving some kind of impulse, input yeah and even if you ask them 'Hey, what do you think about that? Can we continue like in this direction.' People like sit there and they say 'Yeah.' (P12 shortly laughing) and that's it and very difficult and yeah, again cultural issues. I feel like especially people from Asian countries have sometimes trouble like being very

	involved in a group and kind of... I don't know.
Interviewer	Do you think this is maybe also because from their teaching and learning background, they are not used to it?
P11	Maybe. And also cultural because they usually don't want, you know stick out of the group or like they are very, very polite in a way, in a very... yeah.
P12	I have kind of maybe a little bit different because, well I have, when I have had group work and there was, there have been like people from Asian countries. There have been like, someone can have, there have been like people who are like talk a lot and sometimes it's kind of, occasionally it has been like, you would just like 'Ok, let's talk more like, less than... (making hand movements)'
Interviewer	Chatting.
P11	Less chitty chat and more action.
P12	Yes, less chatting and more action and like agreeing on what each need to do (P11: Yeah.), what each person does and then we can go home and do, or to the library or somewhere else and do our part than... and sometimes this chatting has gone, gotten a little bit on my nerves, but other than that's been kind of, there are Asian peoples who, people from Asian countries who do kind of good work...
P11	Yeah, tue.
P12	... and who participate....
P11	It's not only Asians, it's also, as I said, it's in generally related to language issues and people of course, if they don't, if they can't express themselves properly and then course they have trouble like (P12: Yeah (in mother tongue).) influencing the group work.
P12	Yeah, there, like some of my cohort mates have like can be chatty or less chatty, but they are, most of the time they are like do their job (P11 agreeing), well work on time and yeah.
Interviewer	You get to an end result.
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	When you think about writing together in a group because this is more now related to working in a group, but in the end you have sometime to write an essay or present, but when we talk about writing together. Did you have any challenges there because you (P11) addressed language issues a bit, which may influence this, but what other aspects.
P12	I think like writing an essay together, it's for example, one of my group works we had to do a presentation and an essay and we did our essay like, we had questions like and each of our group member answer and write his or her group, answers or part of

	<p>the essay, like answer, answering the questions and having his or her own sources and well, when I looked at the essay, which was completed in a sense, I noticed that there was a lot of, well I don't know if it's cultural or just, I don't think it's language thing, but I don't know, hopefully not cultural thing either, but more like it was just one or two of our group members had forgotten to, they had, in the text they had sources, but the sources were not in the references. So, I was like 'Ok, these and these are not on the reference list, can you please put your sources on the reference list because it's not.' For me it's like a little bit (nationality P11) way of thinking 'Ok, I have been, I have been taught that every source that you use in your text, have to be found in the references.' And yeah, it was a little bit frustrating to...</p>
Interviewer	... check every time and...
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	... look it up.
P12	Yeah, it was a bit frustrating and to see that this is not, what is this source and this is not found in references. But, it, yeah, it got done in the end.
Interviewer	What about you P11?
P11	With one exception, all the group essays, I wrote myself.
Interviewer	Wait, what?
P12	What?
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	You wrote all the group essays yourself?
P11	For one exception, yeah.
Interviewer	Wow. How come? Wait, first clarify this, because there was no input from the others?
P11	<p>Either that or we kind of silently agreed that it is easier and less stress for everybody if just one person does it and then then the others of course they crosscheck if they are ok with it and give their opinion, but I had kind of similar experience as you (P12) just stated with people like, people who had obvious language issues and then they write their stuff and then you go through it and there is like grammar mistakes and spelling mistakes and stuff and then there is a few passages, they are just too good and then you put into google and it's copied from somewhere and then you like 'Hey, you can ruin both of our grades with that shit.' and then I just ended up doing it myself and yeah.</p>
Interviewer	To avoid basically...
P11	Yeah, to avoid that kind of stuff because it's just too much work, too much stress to do it together and the end result is never what something you are happy with in my

	experience because...
Interviewer	So, you are...
P11	Because, yeah...
P12	You wanted to be happy with, you wanted to be happy...
P11	I wouldn't have minded letting someone else write it, it's not about that I have to like write it the way I wanted it to be, but...
P12	You are not a control freak (smiling).
P11	And I am not a control freak, but I have to have some kind of trust that the person who writes it, kind of does the job well. As I said, I had one exception where we really like, everybody contributed and everybody wrote and we had like one person in charge of like doing like the formatting and stuff and checking everything that everything fits together and that worked well, but only because we all knew each other very well and we kind of knew that we could rely on each other to do the job well and.... But with group essays, I don't trust people a lot (laughing), sorry. And if I have to trust them, it's too much work, too much stress.
Interviewer	Ok. So, basically for example you had this case of plagiarism.
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	Your solution was to write it by yourself.
P11	Yes. Because the person didn't even get what she did wrong and I like wrote emails and emails stating 'Hey, you can't do that, even if you put the source, even if you quote the whole thing and put the source, it's not ok to do it.'
Interviewer	Was that a student from your cohort, or?
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	Ok. So, because I have done previous research on this aspect at the other university where there are Bachelor's students, who have usually no experience yet with academic writing or reading in that sense and what we found out, there is of course this, it's called "intentional cheating", which is like planned out and what you describe now, when we referred to this as "unintentional cheating", which was unfamiliar to many lecturers actually, which is quite interesting.
P11	Ok.
P12	Yeah, that's worrying.
Interviewer	That students are not aware of what they are doing wrong in that sense. But that's what we come to the next section, that's related to the support measures here at the university and I will quote here by, her name is Pecorari: "Ideally, academic support

	should be constructed around the needs of the student.” So, to what extent have you been supported for your academic work here at JYU, are you satisfied with the support you receive, yes, no and why. This is basically related to what like the research method courses, which are offered, the research seminars, the thesis seminars, the individual supervision.
P12	Well,... well, since I have previous experience from this university, I could say that, I have been like, I know basically how the things work, things work that ‘OK, you can’t.’, what is, I know what plagiarism is and, or cheating and you can’t quote anything without proper...
Interviewer	Citation.
P12	... citation and sources. And so, it’s ok for me and well, as a matter of support, I would say, I could have used more, I could have more, benefitted more from a different kind of support, more like, my thesis supervisor has held these meetings for our group, but they have been mostly... last fall there was, last fall there was like one per month and now it has been like, was February last time.
Interviewer	Ok.
P12	So, I could have used, benefit more, like...
Interviewer	Regular meetings.
P12	Yeah, regular meetings and kind of approach that T3 took with her students like that she demanded ‘Ok, write this.’
Interviewer	Like, kind of a deadline approach.
P12	Deadline for different things and different writing. ‘Ok, you have a deadline for these, write this and this to this day and send it to me.’ It could have benefitted more than the T9’s approach, but I just have to scramble on with my thesis. Other than that; I would say, well there is like support that, if you need additional support, meet with the teacher, you can always send email or if there is lecturers, like (?) and you can ask the lecturer ‘Ok, can I come and meet you? I would like to talk about this and that.’, but personally I don’t go easily meet professor, teacher, lecturer. I can talk with them of course, but yeah.
Interviewer	What about you P11?
P11	I have to say that the support here is great, really good. I am very satisfied, overall I am happy. Yeah, I’ve like been under the impression from the first day until now that, you can always like talk to the staff and approach them and ask for help and support and that everybody does their best to kind of organize the things in a way that are suitable for most people and yeah, that’s great and especially in the, I am with T3 (speaking to P12), so in the thesis seminar and yeah, I know that she is very busy and still she finds time to support everybody. You can always write the lecturer and if you have like questions concerning a source or I don’t know, they are always friendly and

	always helpful and they say 'Hey, if you have anymore questions, just schedule a meeting.' or something and for me, that's incredible.
Interviewer	Because compared to back home...
P11	Exactly.
Interviewer	How did you like because, how did you know that you can do that? Did it take some time until you realized you can do that?
P11	No, it was just general...
P12	Atmosphere.
P11	... atmosphere here and...
P12	It was told that 'Ok, we are here for you, just email us or and then we can schedule a meeting.'
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	But when you think about for example your development as a student academically, do you think that the courses offered here have increased that, or have developed anything further, like the research courses, I think there is this, I am not sure if you have the same, but academic reading and writing.
P12	We don't have that.
Interviewer	You have something similar.
P12	Do you have some kind of academic...
Interviewer	... writing course.
P11	Not really. Well, kind of. We have this Integrated Research Communication class.
P12	Yeah, I have heard.
P11	Is that...
P12	Yeah.
Interviewer	Yeah, that's the equivalent.
P11	Ok, so yeah we have that and I found to be super helpful, but I know that many of us didn't and it was helpful if you knew earlier on what you wanted to write about, your thesis. That was super helpful because you kind of already wrote introduction, literature review, all that kind of stuff and then there were people who just didn't know what to write about and then obviously all they did for that course was kind of for nothing in a way, but for the poeple who knew what to do, they really could benefit from it a lot.

P12	For me the academic reading and writing course were kind of, kind of eye-opening experience in a sense that we had to, there was, like we had pair and we had to, we had a pair, peer review like our partner's work. So it was kind of eye-opening experience to see 'Ok, I have written this kind of text and it's kind of was answering to the, what is, what was asked, well not asked, but like the standards of the text or writing and, when your partner is like very different kind of text, it's like you are like 'Ok, this is not.', then you just write ok kind of feedback, 'Ok, you should do this and maybe that.'
Interviewer	So, you provided actually peer support in that sense.
P12	Maybe. Hopefully (laughing), I tried at least and it was like very interesting to see that 'Ok, different people from different countries have different perspective and...'
Interviewer	Different experience.
P12	Yeah, different experience to write and view of academic writing.
Interviewer	So, when we were talking now about all this support, you said that it is really nice that you can contact everyone, but what would you like to recommend and what would you like to see more in support, when it comes to you developing in an academic context.
P11	Good feedback and strict feedback.
P12	Yeah.
P11	Telling people where they are wrong and not just saying 'Hey, thanks for your opinion.' This is so important, especially when developing academic skills. That's, yeah, that's the very basis on which we have to develop academic skills I think. If I don't have a teacher who tells me what like the state of the research, but kind of let's everybody just give their opinion in a discussion, there is no, no benefit whatsoever for me at least, personally. So, this is something that I have to say needs to be improved and I have been in classes from the psychology department, and it's like night and day.
Interviewer	Ok!
P11	It's night and day and so this kind of, it seemed to me that this is really an issue here in the department and maybe also like related to educational research in general, which is always like "free for interpretation" in a way and...
P12	You would be more scientific...
P11	Yes.
Interviewer	So, in the psychology department, you did take courses, or?
P11	Yeah.
Interviewer	And you received feedback which was more...?

P11	Yeah, I mean my grades were a lot less, much worse, but I was ok with that because for the first time here I had the feeling that I am getting told where I am wrong and where I have to better and have to be more rigid or I don't know. Yeah.
P12	It was probably, it reminded you from the (town in which P11 studied before), from the previous studies.
P11	Also, yeah and yeah. So, that's yeah in my opinion, but I have stated that to like C2 and other the people consistently over the past two years that's not, it's not, personally I think it's not good the way it is on this behalf.
Interviewer	How did you communicate this to C2 and the coordinators?
P11	The way I just telling you now.
Interviewer	Ok, just talking about it.
P11	I am, yeah I am giving written feedback for the courses, like in Korppi and just telling them that is not probably in a few years, if this kind of keeps developing that way.
P12	I think I like to see more rigid than strict supervisor of thesis writers or like have actually like deadlines for different parts of the thesis process that, which would help people to like send their thesis or make their thesis on a certain timeline and it would prevent anyone, it would prevent from like
Interviewer	Extending...
P12	Niin, yeah extending time for making thesis complete. And for example for me I was at the beginning, I was 'Of course I will do my thesis, finish my thesis by, at the beginning of May.', but now I am like 'Ok, maybe during the Fall.' At the end of, during August I have thesis ready and I can send it for...
Interviewer	Submission.
P12	Yeah, submission.
Interviewer	Ok, thanks a lot. So, these are basically the last questions and it's basically related to the whole discussion we just had. So, what do you think was the most important thing we talked about during this whole session? And is there anything you would like me to ask you, which was missing actually.
P12	I think you had very good questions like support and what kind of development we would like to see based on our own experience and background.
P11	Yeah. For me personally, was the important issue for today was, that's also the most important issue for me in general for studying here, is how to make courses, develop courses and develop the teaching in ways that are more beneficial for the student in terms of academic knowledge basically and yeah.
Interviewer	Ok. That's it. There is one question, which the first focus group asked me to ask. So, I

	have continued asking that question every time and you (addressing P12) have actually answered that question already actually. Are you finishing your thesis in time? You said, no basically.
P12	No, not...
Interviewer	Not necessarily.
P12	Well, my original was like May like...
Interviewer	After the second year finishing it.
P12	Yeah. And now it's like going to be during Summer, beginning of Fall before it's like going to be submitted the final.
Interviewer	Ok, What about you (addressing P11)?
P11	I planned to submit it by the end of April, but then I started working at the beginning of April and now it kind of delayed everything a bit, but I will still submit in time, most probably during the next two weeks, so.
Interviewer	Ok, thank you. That's it.