R: So this is basically looking at what you guys have done, and because it’s a pilot program… how can we change… like that worked, what didn’t work? Uhm, cause I think yours is really interesting because you’re the only people who worked in a group. So it’ll be interesting to think about… because I know, sort of going through it and a couple of options, so we’re starting off with your proposals. Uhm, how did you find writing your proposals?

S: Well we did rush things slightly…

R: hmmm?

S: uhm… but… I don’t think it was… it

L: It was stressful but it wasn’t too bad

S: I was basically finished the program, before I wrote the proposal, so I had that done, so-

L: Yeah

R: yeah… so had you used the microbits before or…?

L: Not properly, just fiddling round with it, that was it-

S: It was really easy to pick up though, because of the scratch editor and things, it was really easy to use… uhm.. but yeah, writing the lesson plan, I had no idea what to do for that, the timing and everything, so I basically didn’t do that for the proposal, I just…

L: Yeah

S: explained what they had to do, look at shit…

R: What about- how did you feel like there was enough support in writing the proposal? Should it have more structure? Was it nice to have…? Yanno

L: I think we had the help with it, because when we first were talking about it… I can’t remember his name now but we were talking to someone in Open Lab who gave us like the lesson plans and-

R: David?

S: hmmm

L: I think we got a bit of help with that, but it was still a bit of, not really sure what to do because… like... I guess we weren’t really sure how to structure that into a lesson I guess.

R: hmm

L: I mean, most of structure would help, a bit more guide in what to help with it

S: Maybe some sort of template or, document or something, because it’s literally just write what you want, and no prompt of what to include or… think through or-

R: Yeah… no, that’s fair enough, and then… so, you… ended up using the one proposal, which I think made it way, way easier. Uhm, to take into lessons. Did you find that you had to… change… was there a lot of change between the proposal and the actual lessons that you gave?

S: Well we didn’t change the output at all, but we did change the lessons after the first lesson because we realised how slow or fast students were?

L: Just dynamically changing it really, depending on the school I propose.

S: And there was a lot of difference between those schools as well

R: Yeah… because I think… who was better? Was it Gatemoor or Goldchain?

S+L: Gatemoor school…

R: Do you think the sets, from what I gathered? Cause I gather they were both middle sets, depends on the students… the makeup of students in each class, uh Goldchain was slightly… lower?

S: Uhm, yeah, yeah.

L: Yeah, a bit- more-

S: A bit more behaved I guess at Gatemoor overall

L: It might have been because the teachers had much more active roles, where-

S: Yeah there were two more teachers.. Yeah actually that’s a good point.

L: [muffled] at Goldchain I think, the teacher… like I think, it would be good to have like- I understand that Gatemoor were much more interested, Goldchain didn’t seem that bothered about us. It was really kind of- left to our own devices that kind of thing-

R: Yeah

S: Yeah, the teacher kinda marked at the back and she didn’t really listen. They didn’t really feel like they were trying to help…

R: Maybe there’s something there about making it more explicitly clear what the teachers need to do in the classroom. Like I said “You definitely need to be there, and in the classroom” and maybe say that they need to… need to do a little bit, introduce some things… because obviously they know their class more than-

S: yeah

R: maybe a stricter outline of what teachers should be doing, and not doing in the class?

S: The classroom management was probably enough really… cause yeah… Goldchain, she didn’t really do much at all, so it was kinda just left to us.

L: Yeah

S: And it was up to us to keep them quiet and-

L: Sometimes it was like, it would be like, I dunno, doing a bit of crash coding and we would look around and she wouldn’t be there, she’d left the room …

R: [surprised hiss]

S: Yeah she did leave the room once and we looked around and we didn’t know what to do. She just sort of walked out

L: She did that a few times

R: Yeah so interestingly so you guys aren’t DBS checked.

S: I’m not

L: yeah I’m not

R: If OFSTED were there, and they found you, being in a room alone with students without a DBS check… they would just fail right then and there, they wouldn’t need to go anywhere else, it’s pretty- it’s a very serious thing. And of course… sometimes like, if they need to og to the bathroom or something, it’s quite a lot to get another teacher in just to look after you for a couple of minutes, but I think in future versions of…even with DBS check you shouldn’t really be left alone, but… that… happened not just to you, it’s happened to a couple of other students who were like “I’ve got no idea-“

S: You made it very to us that that would be the case, but I didn’t know it was different for the teachers…

L: Yeah

R: So that’s… Even more clear to the teachers, some of the teachers here had said… I said that it had happened at a school, and they were like “Teachers know, it’s something that’s engrained into their training. DO not leave somebody in the room- even, just don’t leave the visitors in aroom if there’s kids there.”

L+S: Yeah

R: So yeah, it’s definitely one thing that’s uh… interesting… definitely, something along the lines, around that, about what’s expected of the teacher. But also, making sure that there’s more DBS checking, it just happened to be the timeframe we did didn’t work out, and it was easier you guys just doing your three lessons, and not to worry too much about… I think, next year, I’m gonna ask the BBC if they can DBS check. Because it doesn’t take too long, it’s not really that expensive.

S: Do you know how much you have to pay for it?

R: I’d get the BBC to pay for it

S: Yeah that’s what I mean, if you get the BBC to do it then… even if we had to pay…

R: Yeah, yeah, I mean it can be anywhere between ten and thirty quid maybe? It’s not expensive. Really… it’s [muffled]. So, going back to the lessons, did you feel it was easier to… and you don’t have a frame of reference, but would prefer to do it again in a group, together, or individually. How do you think it would go? …if you had to do it individually.

S: Well… we could have done it individually

L: Yeah…

S: But it did help being a lot ina group. There were a lot fo times when we had to go around to help-

L: yeah

S: Where we had to go fix the code around the- [muffled]

L: yeah, yeah-

S: where we had to fix the code, and it would have been really, it woud be ifficult to do that-

L: Yeah, yeah I think if the exact same thing happened individually we wouldn’t have been able to get through as much

S: At least the way we did it

L: Yeah like with the powerpoints and programming

R: Yeah, so if the BBC came over to you and said “Would you… It could either be individual or groups… Which would you…?”

S: Probably groups

L: Yeah

R: Yeah I think, personally, I would prefer to do it… it’s just nice to know that somebody else knows what’s going on, that you’ve got somebody else who knows what’s going on

L: And if something goes wrong you can rely on them to-

S: Yeah so [muffled]

L: Like it’s already pretty difficult, it’s already panic-y if something goes wrong. It’s like….

S: Especially if you have to deal with more than one thing

L: Yeah

S: you can rely on the other person to do the rest of it.

R: Yeah I totally get it… Uhm. There was another thing you said that brought up a really interesting question… I can’t remember… I’ll have to think. Uhm. So one of the things I’m really interested in, as part of this research, is that I think it’s a really cool opportunity for computer science undergraduates to do something that’s not really… typical? In the undergrad course? Like, being able to go out and actually work with people and… really cool skills you can get back from that, maybe you don’t get so much just doing… coursework? Or programming or whatever… do you feel like you’ve gained any kind of skills from doing this?

L: This, uhm, when I try to explain what things, I actually have to think about like… in the coursework, when you’re doing individual coursework you don’t really have to think- well you do, but you don’t have to explain it to anyone actually really-

R: yeah

L: -it works where, this kind of… it’s an eye-opener, you have to really understand what you’re doing to be able to explain it to a low level as well, to make sure they understand what you’re talking about, cause… It’s like, one thing to know what you’re doing, but it’s another thing to know how to like… reduce it down to a simpler context that makes any sense. It gives you a better understanding of what you’re actually doing I suppose… so yeah.

R: Is there anything else you feel…?

S: Uhmmm…

R: What about presentation skills, because you guys were good with presentation stuff. Had you done lots before or…?

S: I guess it’s good experience sort of knowing how to judge how long something would take, when giving a presentation, that sort of thing

R: Like time management skills?

S: yeah, and I can’t think because I’ve never had to actually, like, plan a lesson before

L: hmmm

S: Uhm. Yeah. But I’ve probably got loads of skills but I probably don’t think about them … like.. in the background

R: What about working- did you do much with the teachers? Much communication with them? Organising things?

S: Like, a little bit. Like files and stuff

L: Yeah, not a lot.

R: Do you feel like there could have been more there? Like a bit more support there

S: One good thing I would definitely suggest, because most of the schools have like a system for giving students stuff-

L: Oh yeah, like VLEs?

R: Yeah, VLEs, yeah

S: Yeah like the VLE thing…. So having access to the VLE, or giving the teachers to put the code on the students computer is really useful, instead of going around the classroom and-

R: Like a [muffled]

S: So I’d definitely look at that.

R: hmmm

S: -They can use that maybe, because we didn’t know that was a thing

R: Yeah I hadn’t thought about it until they said “oh we can put it on the VLE and download the files”

S: made it much faster

R: Makes sure everybody’s got the same level of code… uhm… do you feel like there was any kind of big challenges in.. when you were delivering the lessons?

L: It wasn’t much… of It was just Goldchain, getting children actually listening was actually difficult… cause, I know you mentioned that it should be the teachers responsibility but there were times when I had to like… raise my voice to get them to listen because the teacher just wasn’t do anything about it, and I felt a bit bad doing it but at the same time like… what else can you do?

R: That’s fine, knowing when to do that… is a skill in itself

L: Yeah

R: Some people, they go into the class, they’ll shout at the kids and the kids get worse, because they’re like “you don’t know what you’re doing”, so knowing when to do that is… is… quite… quite a skill to have to get them to listen, and Year 8s can be… interesting sometimes. They’re just getting to that point where they’re like, no longer the meek Year 7s and they like…

S: Some were… some of them were definitely like that cause…

R: Yeah, that’s part of the fun I think, with Year 8s. Uhm… yeah so, one of my other questions is about timelines. So, it was kinda over Easter, and then the first three weeks back… how… did that work for you?

L: Uhm, I think it would have been… a little bit better if it was a bit sooner because like, missing lectures right before the exam period is a bit stressful and like… and having to recap lectures and like…, I don’t actually know what they’re talking about because I’m not there, and it might be a bit easier if it was over Easter break? Although I know not many people will be here then… uhm… I dunno really, it’s just… it didn’t really affect us that much, it was more like… it would have been a bit easier if it was like the exam period rather than like… a bit earlier before the exam period rather than right next to it if that makes any sense? Cause we had a lot of coursework to hand in at the same time and it’s a bit stressful at the same time, to manage it around revision, coursework and this.

R: Yeah… I was just thinking like, there’s so much stuff that goes on… like… you think “oh we’ll do it in December, but there’s December deadlines… January exams, Februiary new semester…”

L: Best time of year would probably be February/March, cause in our semester nothing really… there was one piece of coursework and that was it really, did it in about ten minutes, it wasn’t really [laughs] It wasn’t really

R: It clearly wasn’t too difficult [laughs]

S: It took me a bit longer [laughs]

L: It wasn’t that big of an issue [laughs] it wasn’t like networks, it wasn’t like anxiety , it was just like…

[Irrelevant talking about networking coursework]

R: I can’t remember where I was going with that… timelines… I suppose I was just saying about during the Easter holidays… maybe something than rather than doing lessons, it could be set up as an afterschool thing you could just go along to? Like, you could just do it for a week? Doing like a bunch of afterschool lessons? I tmight be a little more organisation on the teachers part?

S: the problem with that is you’re only going to want to get students who want to take part

L: Yeah exactly

R: Hmm…

S: The point of this is to get students who aren’t as interested to get involved I get, so that wouldn’t be the best bet

L: Might be a bit demoralising as well, if you spend a lot of time doing it and like… two people turn up

R: True, true… I’m still trying to think of how it might work, and over holidays…. I guess if you get paid, then people might be more likely to stay for a few extra weeks… [muffled]

S: If you’re doing it with second years again, and doing it after lectures, because all our lectures are in the morning then…

L: Yeah, I’d say if it was possible, definitely possibly march or February time because if it’s later on then…

R: Yeah

L: I guess you could do it later I suppose but…

R: Yeah it’s true… and… So… support. Do you feel like there could have been any more support from the BBC for what you were doing?

L: Uhm…

S: For what we were doing…? I don’t know if we really needed it, but we didn’t get any…

R: Is there anything they could have done, or…?

S: Uhm..

L: I think the surprise drop-in with Churchill was a bit like… that was quite-

S: we didn’t know that they would be there filming, so that was quite…

L: Yeah, some of the equipment didn’t work

S: And we were supposed to use these files and then-

R: They didn’t tell you they were coming. What?

S: No they didn’t say anything

R: No, I was away! So I just… I didn’t realise they hadn’t told you! I assumed they would message you

S: We could see 3 BBC vans on the site

L: And we thought, huh is this for us? And we get in and there’s cameras set up?

S: It went okay in the end.

L: Yeah it was fine

R: I feel like my thing I want to feedback to the BBC, is just to… let people know what you’re doing. Like this whole thing about you guys staying later on Friday… I had no clue about that, it wasn’t until I said we could do this… a nice easy journey down all together, and then Delphine says “Tell the undergrads they’re not allowed on the bus!” and I’m like… “Okay?” [laughs] Sorry guys, the bus is now not an option for you… Have you managed to book your travel?

S+L: yeah

R: Awesome, keep all your receipts and send them to the BBC and they’ll reimburse you

S: Yeah there’s some electronic thing… keep the receipts and then… We’ll have to get taxis

R: To get from the train station?

S: Yeah

R: It should be fine, if there’s any issue I’ll chat with them, they need to step up their responsibility a bit… which is why I’m like checking…. Another thing one of the students brought up was the idea of getting more resources from them? Like videos, and… so you used that youtube video right for the… emoji thing… the only reason I knew the emoji thing was there was because I trawled the internet for about five hours… like… “what can you do with microbits and BBC content?” Do you feel like, to have that the… Dr Who theme was strong enough through all the lessons? Or…

S: No

L: We definitely… yeah

S: I think… we were talking to some people and they didn’t get any Dr Who at all

L: I know it’s a bit out of touch, I don’t think they know much about Dr Who… I guess it was different for us, because that was like… it go… re… it got uhm… rebooted in like… ten year ago or summing. It was not really popular now, it’s not really something kids really care about.

R: Yeah that’s very true, and-

S: What was the point of the BBC saying use Dr Who or Springwatch? Was it like, getting the exposure for the BBC or was it to give us the idea to use-

R: A little bit of both. The whole idea was… that they were going to film specialist content using Dr Who and the BBC to backup the ideas, and then they suddenly realised that if they were going to do that for three lessons for… twenty people involved? What’s that… they’d have to film sixty different things and that was just totally not feasible. But they still kept the BBC in Sprinwatch thing, and then… they were like, oh well, we used the BBC stuff because it actually… the BBC micro:bit doesn’t really belong to the BBC anymore, it belongs to the Microbit foundation, which is mostly separate from the BBC. SO they were trying to- the way to get funding was around that increase of peoples engagement with BBC content… and that’s why there was weird… it had to be-

S: To get funding, yeah….

L: hmmm

R: I think if it was more open to more BBC things, it might have been more…

S: Yeah?

R: People might have been more interested

S: Like, I don’t really watch the BBC

L: There’s one… I only really watch the One show… that’s it

R: It’s an interesting thing.. I don’t really know… It would be cool to maybe go to schools and ask what BBC content they actually watch

S: Yeah, but then it’ll just be, it’s not gonna be… like.. it won’t be Dr who and stuff, using [laughs]

R: yeah, they wanted to use Blue Planet because they didn’t actually own it, somebody else filmed it and then the BBC buy it, so they don’t have the rights at the BBC.

S: Right

R: Definitely something to feedback, in terms of… not many kids know about- well you find there’s one kid in every class who knows everything about Dr Who-

S: I’ve seen one show. Ever.

R: [laughs] What?

S: [laughs]

R: Uhm… yeah, that’s all it takes. Daleks, Dr Who, Tardis, Sonic Screwdriver, and then usually the kids go “Does it have to be Dr Who?” “…no… it can be anything”. But yeah, people have noticed the whole Dr Who theme doesn’t really work… Uhm… I spent so long looking at clips.

S: Yeah

R: So uhm, yeah. We kinda talked about what the BBC did. Now, taxis… taxis are a good thing to talk about. I can’t remember if you guys had any issues with taxis?

L: We didn’t really have any problems with taxis…

R: Apart from that one time where two taxis showed up?

S: hmmm

R: Uhm… I don’t know… no…

S: It wasn’t like… they were alright… they’ve never really that bad, not like they were for other people

L: There was one guy, and he wasn’t even really like, we were sat in like…

S: Oh that guy…

L: he lied, and said that he was waiting for ten minutes and we’d been waiting there and we couldn’t see him

S: He’d been doing loops or something, and he blamed us for not seeing him while we stood there and didn’t look at the right time, and it was only five minutes late

L: He wasn’t there, then he wasn’t there

S: Yeah, we didn’t really care…

L: He was rattled in the car, and he was saying how he wasn’t having a good day and uh…

S: Yeah he... he wasn’t very happy, he was really, really not happy

L: Yeah

S: But we didn’t really have-

L: -any issues-

S: -issues yeah.

R: Well as long as you were alright… uhm… yeah, so one thing in particular is maybe that, next year, rather than me booking the taxis, students would have a budget, they can pay and claim it back, or… I dunno.. they can book them themselves kinda through the admin here? Like saying it’s oart of the project, and then I’ll approve it and say “they’re okay to book that”, because then you know when the taxis are, it’s in your name, whatever… you think that would work better than this system, or/…?

S: Well it sounds like it was a lot of work for you-

L: Yeah

S: It worked good for us, not having that responsibility.

R: [laughs] you’ve had the least worries with it, poor Student9 had something wrong with every journey

S: That’s pretty bad

R: I’m thinking, that if like.. uh.. people have control of their own taxis then they can say when they want it, they can ring up about it… uhm…I think that would work a little bit better

S: I remember we didn’t ever quite know…

R: It’ll be something to test out at least… and… yeah.. that’s pretty much everything I can think of off the top of my head. Is there anything else you feel could be redesigned, that there might have been an issue, or maybe could be better in… and ideal world?

L: Hmm… Trying to think of any of the issues that we found, it mostly went fine really.

S: I think it went pretty well… uhm…

R: That’s what I was thinking- oh, one of the teachers said that a better way to do it might be… instead of doing three lessons is to be like, classroom assistant for one of the lessons, like the first lesson you go in, meet the class, help out in the lesson, you don’t have to do anything really, you don’t really have to speak, but you can just kinda get to know how the class are, and doing things? That might help you redesign your lessons

S: Ah, like go in for a lesson first and then do a lesson?

R: Yeah

S: Ah, yeah, get a sort of-

L: that might work out a bit better yeah

R: Yeah, cause I think with that you sort of arrived in the class like “I don’t know who these people are, or what they’re doing”

S: I got the most out of it when I was speaking to students, when I was just explaining how the code worked.

R: hmm

L: Yeah…

S: Rather than in the presentation, cause you could actually sort of gauge whether they understood it or not, if you just stand at the front and lectured them, there was no way of knowing if-

L: Yeah

R: And you were using worksheets as well right?

L: yeah they were pretty nice like-

S: [muffled]

R: Was that always the plan or did you introduce that-

L: It was kinda introduced I think, we did the presentations and lesson plans… uhm… it really wasn’t what we originally thought when we were writing lesson plans… and then we thought, we should probably do it, I don’t know why we did it…?

S: Uhm-

L: [muffled]

S: Some of our lessons were a bit complicated with what we were doing, and some of them needed some step by step instructions like…

L: Yeah

S: and then some of it was instructions that could help, so it was kind of… so giving out those instructions was kinda

L: I think it kinda helped

S: It made it easier, it helped

L: yeah it helped. The one we did where we gave out the instructions and then, on the board it was like, every couple of minutes we would reveal more bits of code, rather than just instructions-

S: Yeah it was quite good actually

L: and the guy from the BBC was saying it was a good idea as well… so that was good of him. And then they kinda knew what they were kinda doing when they could see some information to help, and have it in their hands… I think doing stuff through the Scratch editor was that they were trying to order the blocks… you know the blocks that execute whenever you want to? Like… They wanted them- they tried and like do it sequentially as if it was like, normal programming and then left it for-

R: yeah

L: So it was a bit easier for them to see rather than it having ot be its own independent block rather than having it in its own independent block rather than seeing it on its own. So that sort of, balancing… so… yeah

S: It turned into like, if I was going to do it next time, I would say it’s quite a visual, I think a powerpoint slide where you slowly show-

L: Have instructions on it

R: Yeah

S: and then you can leave it all on one, and people who are behind can catch up.

R: Uhm sounds good, are there any other bits of advice you would give if you were going to do it again next year?

S: I would say… well… I think the best thing is to have like an end product, at the end of each lesson, like-

L: that’s true

S: So like, three definite stages so like, to keep them interested, otherwise it’s just “What am I doing?”

R: Yeah

S: They don’t really know why they’re doing stuff

L: Some kind of catch up, you lose them between lessons, so showing a difference between the beginning and the end, so maybe have the end of each lesson saying “we’ve done this, so next lesson we’ll do this”, but one of our problems was judging the speed of student, so recapping at the end of each lesson, they didn’t always get to do… so I think if they did a preliminary session as a classroom assistant that would probably help quite a lot of them…

R: yeah

S: and definitely with like the, getting through the thing-

L: Yeah

R: you reckon?

S: It would help get them up to speed

L: Just even having a teacher sit and explain what technical skills they have and stuff. Like, in Goldchain, I kinda forgot about this but in schools they have like a freeze-board thing, they have a lock like… you’d find the kids wouldn’t listen, and you’d have to change the presentation and update it, whenever you froze it then they couldn’t see that…

R: Yeah, uhm, well I believe that’s pretty much everything. Second time I’ve said that in this conversation, if you think of anything else, feedback or questions, let me know, because it is really interesting to think about how we might go about redesigning this.