

## Group Etiquette Vignette Transcript

INT. STUDY LOUNGE – DAY

Three students, MICHAEL, PAMELA, and ERIN, are working on a group project, with papers and laptops spread over the table.

Erin looks at a paper which outlines the presentation they are working on together.

ERIN

Okay. So... an 8 to 10 minute group speech, discussing a “problem” that affects college students. Other than that there aren’t really any strict guidelines, so we can figure out what direction we want to take it.

MICHAEL

Well I was thinking about it last night, and I think we should talk about the rising costs of tuition.

PAMELA

Okay, that’s not a bad idea—

MICHAEL

So, let’s start with thinking about the different ways students deal with high tuition.

ERIN

Well, hold on, let’s talk about other possibilities first.

MICHAEL

I thought this idea would work fine though. You don’t like it?

PAMELA

No it’s okay, we should just talk about some other options before we decide.

Michael sits back.

MICHAEL

Okay... What ideas do you have?

PAMELA

Well, we could talk about the problem of alcohol abuse.

ERIN

Yeah, that would be good too.

Michael rolls his eyes.

MICHAEL

I'm pretty sure every other group is going to talk about drinking – it's kind of the obvious topic.

PAMELA

What about talking about discrimination? The issues facing students of minority groups, different sexual orientations...

MICHAEL

No, no, that's too broad. We need to be more focused than that, talking about tuition costs gives us a good topic to really focus in on. Okay, I think this is probably going to be the best idea, so let's get started with it.

ERIN

I guess so...

PAMELA

Okay...

DISSOLVE TO:

A montage as time passes while they work. Michael types rapidly on his laptop.

MICHAEL

We should start with building the problem, talk about how much tuition has increased over time compared to average income, inflation...

ERIN

Are we sure it has? Do we have those numbers?

MICHAEL

Of course it has, I'll look up the exact figures later.

DISSOLVE TO:

PAMELA

We should talk about the contradiction for society that we're sticking so many of the smartest young people with so much debt from going to school.

MICHAEL

Yeah, yeah, I already put that idea in. I thought that was a good opening idea.

DISSOLVE TO:

ERIN

What about engaging the audience with some questions or something?

PAMELA

Yeah, I like that. We could get a show of hands for how many people are going to be in debt when they graduate.

MICHAEL

Ehhh... This is supposed to be a speech, not a discussion, we're supposed to convince them of our point.

ERIN

I think maybe something like that could help build our argument...

MICHAEL

No I think we're heading in a good direction with this. I think this will work fine.

DISSOLVE TO:

Erin has given up. She's sitting back and barely paying attention. Pamela is still trying...

PAMELA

Are we talking about the difficulties of students from low income families trying to go to college?

MICHAEL

Yeah of course, that's already in here. Look, just let me finish, I'm almost done.

DISSOLVE TO:

Michael stops typing and begins to pack up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay, I think we're in good shape. I'll clean it up tonight and email it to you guys so you can get familiar with it. Then let's meet same time on Sunday to practice?

PAMELA

Okay.

ERIN

Sure.

MICHAEL

All right, I think this went well. See you guys on Sunday!

Michael leaves.

Pamela and Erin stand and begin gathering their things.

ERIN

So I guess we're done...

PAMELA

Can you believe how obnoxious he is?

ERIN

Yeah, and I feel like I can't even get angry because he's doing all the work, and it seems like it will be pretty good too.

PAMELA

I know! I feel stupid complaining because we'll still get a good grade, but I actually want to be involved.

ERIN

And he's a good writer, but some of his ideas are ridiculous. It's a bad idea to include the audience?

PAMELA

Alcohol abuse is an "obvious" problem but tuition isn't?

ERIN

Well anyway, what can we do? He's not cheating or anything. We can't really talk to the professor if he's doing more than his share, can we? And if he wants to put in all the work I'm not going to get too worked up, it's not like I don't have a billion other things to worry about.

PAMELA

But we're not going to get anything out of this. He shot down all of our ideas; he wouldn't listen to anything we said. How are we supposed to learn anything? I want to be able to at least contribute...

ERIN

I don't know what we can do... We'll just try not to work with him again, I guess.

PAMELA

It seems like we should be able to do something....

They walk away.