Now, where did the fun go? Learning experiences in teaching Entertainment-Education

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Abstract

Since the academic year 2004-2005, Stenden University – in collaboration with the Center for Media & Health in The Netherlands offers a 15-credit course in Entertainment-Education (E-E). We reconstruct how we met two challenges in the field of E-E in the Netherlands: 1) creating a systematic place for the E-E strategy in diverse curricula in educational institutions and 2) creating a didactic approach to E-E that does justice to the E-E strategy itself. The paper weaves the history of the pilot project that introduced E-E in Dutch education, together with the learning experiences of the students and teachers involved at Stenden. The balance between joy and learning required in an E-E intervention is similar to the balance needed in *teaching* E-E, as an alignment between theory and practice. During the course at Stenden, students put their theoretical learning of the strategy to practice: they go through all the steps of the process of an actual entertainment-education intervention. They perform research and interviews; manage projects, contact clients, write scripts and pitch their concepts. A switch to an experience oriented learning approach, helped students make an important mind-switch in which they learn to question their original assumptions regarding communication and social change. By social media, the dialogue with these alumni-now-change-agents continues to inform curriculum updates and quality control.

Keywords: experiential teaching, experience learning, management, creativity, fun, authenticity

I tend to agree with Carl Rogers' (1961) "Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning." In essence, he contends that anything of value can't be taught, but that much of value can be learned. I suppose that's one reason I find teaching so unsatisfying and learning so much fun. (Jerry B. Harvey, 1979)

Enter(tain)ing the field

"On the one hand, during the introduction lecture, I was scared out of my mind because it sounded like we would only be involved with theory. But, I really like my assignment and I am looking forward to creating a really great target group video item. If we really have to do something with the application of theory, it is not a problem to me, because it really serves a goal. We are really making something, which is not the case in many modules." (Student Maaike Zeilstra, 21 years old, enrolled for the course 2010-2011)

This quote displays a tension typical of students that enrol for a course in Entertainment-Education at Stenden University in The Netherlands. These BBA students in training at Media & Entertainment Management (M&EM) generally don't aim to become researchers or pursue a career in academia. Yet, in the first years of the course, a traditional academic approach was dominant. Though students have to deliver an entertainment-education intervention plan for a client, the course was largely paper based and verbally oriented. Students studied their target group through desk research and designed their intervention plans based on theory alone. The workshops trained academic reading skills but paid little attention to managerial skills.

In her work on the organizational aspects of Entertainment-Education, "The Turtle and the Peacock" Bouman (1999) describes the cultural differences and resulting organizational tensions in the process of organizing entertainment-education

interventions. On the one hand, there are the academic parties and health promoting institutions – metaphorically referred to as turtles, solid but slow and careful. On the other hand are the media producers – metaphorically referred to as peacocks, flamboyant, creative yet a bit more difficult to gain control over. One might say the original design of the module had a didactic orientation representative of the way a 'turtle' would organize education. But, the course originated in the need to promote the development of a *new* kind of communication professional or manager, capable of rising above this distinction – with a keen eye for the qualities of both worlds (Bouman, 2004; 2010).

The implementation of an E-E module in Stenden originated in the collaboration between Martine Bouman, from the Center for Media & Health (CMH); the dean of Media & Entertainment Management at the time, Enny van de Velden and module coordinator Esther Bouw[1]. In 2004 the CMH developed a long-term plan to design and implement E-E teaching modules in different schools and universities[2] in the Netherlands (Bouman, 2004) . The CMH received a research grant from ZonMw – *the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development* which made it possible to start with six pilot projects. The CMH invited Stenden to participate as the first pilot project organization in 2005

[1] In the earlier years Stenden University went by the name CHN – Christelijke Hogeschool and the Center for Media & Health went by the name Bouman E-E Development. For practical purposes in this paper, both parties are addressed by their current names.

[2] Other schools were the University of Amsterdam, the University of Maastricht, Twente University, the Media Academy en de Netherlands School of Public and Occupational Health. At present, the CMH has also designed an EE teaching module for Windesheim (UAS)..

As a university of applied sciences (UAS) students of Stenden University pursue a BA degree in management and business administration. In The Netherlands, BA students enrolled in higher education, more than in academic universities, can be characterized as "wanting to *do* stuff". They're not particularly fond of theory for its own sake or of research that has no demonstrable immediate value. Stenden's M&EM students don't fit the profile of someone who is involved in media production and gets to know entertainment-education. They are in training to become managers and as such *will not* become one of the creative parties in writing the scripts or shooting the films. They don't want to become researchers either, but managers. The E-E module, a 15 EC minor in their BBA program, prepares them to become the transcending linking pin, specializing in communication and social change. From the interdisciplinary perspective offered in the module, students learn to speak the languages of the different stakeholders involved and develop the sensitivity to translate these parties to one another to promote collaboration. The field of E-E in the Netherlands will be enhanced in the long run, if students about to enter into the media field understand the strategy, know when to apply it and feel comfortable doing so.

But the academic approach in the first years of the module alienated these prospective advocates of the field of E-E. Students articulated this in their response to the first course (n = 12): in their view the name Entertainment-Education didn't cover the content of the actual module. Some say they initially felt a sense of aversion at the thought they might be considered 'educators' afterwards. Others thought they would be educated on what entertainment entails, either in a positive way: "how to entertain?" or in a negative way: "what does mass media do to us?" Some thought it was a course on teaching children the

proper use of media. The academic term for entertainment-education could obviously not be altered for these purposes alone. To connect the educational goals of the module to the experience of students, attention was paid to providing more detailed information in course guides, informational meetings and promotional material[3].

While the pilot program was up and running, elements of E-E were woven into other parts of the curriculum. In modules concerned with media studies, marketing and concept development, E-E stories are woven into the lectures; the workshops; the examples and assignments. Throughout these courses, students already practice research skills required specifically for concept development and creative thinking – they learn to 'kill their darlings' and also learn a lot about visual language, semiotics and storytelling.

The need for a redesign of the module

After the first experiences with the E-E teaching module in 2004-2005 and coinciding with a wave of organizational changes that Media & Entertainment Management encountered, Nynke Winkler Prins Postma was appointed Lecturer Contemporary Visual Culture, Film & Television and coordinator of the Entertainment-Education module[4]. In her first year she copied the module as it had been designed originally. The next year, in

[3] However, after an incubation period in which the course was quietly revised based on student's input, word of mouth spread so fast that too many students wanted to enroll and that more energy was devoted to questioning students' motives for enrollment and sometimes advising them to pick another direction, than to the promotion of the course to attract more attendees.

[4] This wave entailed a reorganization of all 14 schools in Stenden at the time, a shift in the composition of the Board of Directors and a change in faculty and management partly due to these organizational changes.

accordance with the CMH, she took the opportunity to make alterations to the original module, based on students' evaluations (Winkler Prins Postma, 2007).

Nynke encountered a tension in the first module-design: a promise of interdisciplinarity, but an actual focus on writing and researching. The module did not fully incorporate the necessary training to shape an M&EM student into a social change expert. While finishing her first year as a coordinator, before the redesign, students wondered: *"why do we have to focus on the parties in these collaborations that work with words and not with images?"* One might say the module had a rather 'textocentric approach', based more on the legible text over the visual image (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2006) and traditional academic means of producing knowledge than on the more tacit and intuitive styles of media producers. Students had difficulty connecting the overall goals of the module to their personal lives and future careers.

This perception of a missing link had several consequences. The intervention plans they designed did not always meet the expectations of the clients. Students found it difficult to express their ideas and thoughts carefully on paper. The topics the client brought up were sometimes quite abstract for the students. Had students been more capable of expressing themselves in the client's formal language style, their ideas might have shown more promise. Language turned out to be an obstacle for students. Creating an opportunity to overcome these obstacles would help realize the goals of the pilot project. This required a detailed revision of the teaching strategy.

Examples of different clients and their assignments throughout the years

2006 – 2007	MHS*, Amsterdam	Sound Effects: how to stimulate young people to protect their hearing while clubbing
	MHS*, The Hague	How can depression among the elderly be prevented?
2007 – 2008	MHS*, Amsterdam	How can parents of young children in Amsterdam be motivated to improve the dental health of their children?
	Sensoor**	How can people in the age of 18 to 30 years find their way to Sensoor?
2008 – 2009	Oxfam Novib	How to use E-E to involve people in the age group of 20-60 in development collaboration?
	Center for Media & Health	How to promote a more positive image of the elderly through the use of soap series that have a regional focus?
2009 – 2010	Obstetrician's Academy Rotterdam	How to make couples prepare for pregnancy better, as to decrease infant mortality?
	Rutgers Nisso Group	How to increase the awareness of girls in puberty that they can choose contraceptives that match their lifestyle?
2010 – 2011	NIGZ***	How to address the topic of bullying and how to prevent it among the elderly in nursing homes?
	Initiative for Sustainability, University of Duisburg-Essen	How to engage people with migrant backgrounds with the topic of sustainability?

** MHS: Municipal Health Services*
** Sensoor is a contact agency people can contact for a conversation when they feel desperate or are in trouble*
**** NIGZ: Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention*

Though the original module focused strongly on research, students have limited means available for performing research. In part, this was because the research curriculum had not yet been developed fully. Maaike de Jong started working at Stenden in 2004 with the task to redesign the overall research curriculum of M&EM for the then first year students. The first batch of E-E students did not take part in the renewed curriculum. Aside from this, the nine-week time frame does not allow much time for drafting an exhaustive

research design or testing questionnaires. Just how much can students teach their clients about their target group?

Research was limited in another way as well. In the first two years of teaching the E-E module, students performed their target group research mostly by desk research. Not going into the field entailed a risk: it would often reaffirm the stereotypes they had about their target group, without any reality check. Students had to learn to make contact with their target group members and give them a voice. Later, part of the research consisted of visiting and interviewing the target group to make a target group video.

Students were also hesitant to contact clients, to check their assumptions even if they had difficulty with the problem analysis. But a lack of alignment and shared goals in the orientation phase of a project, can lead to mistrust and misrepresentation later on (Bouman, 2002). To break these barriers in communication, in the new design of the module, students now have to visit their client for a debriefing of their assignment. Students report about their meeting by weaving footage of this meeting into the target group video item. This way, the barrier of abstraction is broken for them. The experience teaches students to ask the question behind the question.

Students' evaluations marked the starting point of a change in focus (Winkler Prins Postma, 2007), because they clearly indicated: what we preach is not what we practice in the way we teach. How to change this? *Through the application of the principles of Entertainment-Education to the design of the module itself.* As teachers, we had to learn to understand our target group better, our BA students; connect to them in their language; pre-test new ideas *with* them and also show them, where their feedback and comments were used to alter the set-up of the curriculum. Lastly, we learned: the process of learning

and the role of the teacher are part of the message. There's a tangible incongruence in creating things for people's enjoyment and entertainment, while not enjoying any of the process. Students easily pick up on teacher's incongruence (Brookfield, 2006). A teacher's authenticity is vital for the motivation to put effort into these kinds of projects[5]. We had to demand from ourselves the same things we ask of students, whether it concerns the required skills, the stories and experiences we wanted them to share, or the vulnerability to be wrong from time to time.

Causal ambiguity in a fishbowl[6] exercise

As teachers, we learned we have to practice what we preach. We can't invite students to try out participatory techniques by mentioning this during lectures. Nor could we expect them to to try out new things, such as Liberating Structures (LS), if we were not willing to try them either. As

[5] This authenticity does not entail being an exaggeratedly passionate or cheerful in a way that borders on hysteria – the way you can sometimes see in motivational speakers where there is very little room for doubt or reflection but involves a way of being genuine, demonstrating advocacy for a field based on its actual merits, allowing room for questioning and also being comfortable with the fact that not all answers are available, that not all uncertainties can be met with answers and that not all ambiguities can be resolved (Palmer, 1997)

[6] * "fishbowl" is a technique that promotes active engagement and dialogue in large groups of people, by creating an inner and outer circle. The inner circle is engaged in conversation while the outer circle listens and has the liberty to also step into the inner circle. This creates group-engagement on a deeper level, as all minds are involved in the whole process with each other, rather than a traditional one-to-many approach in traditional lecturing.

Lipmanowicz & McCandless (2010) state: “While LS are difficult to describe, they are easy to learn in practice, since one or two experiences are enough for anyone to start experimenting with them. (2010; 5)”. We decided to replace one traditional academic lecture with a so-called fishbowl session*.

During a plenary introduction in a theory room students were invited to team up with their module group and discuss what topic regarding research they would love to explore most. We signalled how the fixed furniture in the room already implied a classical idea of knowledge transfer from one teacher to many students. We had to relocate to a classroom that would permit the shuffling of chairs. They then took 5 minutes to discuss their questions before sharing these with the group. Three topics were picked: a) how to determine when you have achieved saturation in your data; b) how to distinguish between the connected concepts of cognition and behaviour, and c) how to find out if your intervention works. We agreed to a couple of rules: if you felt you had nothing to add to the conversation anymore, you could get up off your chair and leave. If you were in the outer group, listening in on the conversation, you could tap a person whom you thought had said enough and take their place. We set a timer for 20 minutes per question and briefly evaluated their answers and discussed tips on literature they could use to deepen their understanding.

With amazement we watched the focus with which the inner group listened to one another and the thoughtfulness with which they reacted on each other’s statement. We were also astonished by the focus in the surrounding group. During the first round, students were unfamiliar with the technique, both eager and shy to give it a go. During the first 20 minute review, we discussed how their thinking demonstrated an understanding of causal ambiguity and the complexity of interacting variables. Normally, some 40 minutes of lecturing is needed to build to this concept,

now it spontaneously bubbled up from their minds, because they owned the questions they addressed. They were well humoured when they entered the second round. When things turned a bit quiet, one of the teachers sat down in the inner circle to spark their questioning again, until a wonderful moment: one student stood up, tapped the teacher's shoulder, said 'kssh!' with a big smile, stating, "we can do this without you now!" and we've never before seen students leave a classroom feeling so energized and empowered.

The moment a switch was made to a visual mode of expression, student's capacity to express their ideas in words improved dramatically. Also, when the clients were invited to deliver their feedback not only on paper but also in person, students' motivation increased. Students took their assignment much more seriously when they learned their client would by physically present to evaluate their work. As soon as the outside world looked in on their learning process, things started to change. So what were the changes we made?

Core Changes: focus on the visual, introduction of the media role model, reflection, action!

We went from a traditional basis in lectures and workshops to an experiential basis in training, fieldwork, media production, feedback on draft products and the use of visual techniques. Student's responses made it clear that the audiovisual elements should play a larger part in the whole process (Winkler Prins Postma, 2007). In the redesign of the course, students were invited to do what they do best: make things understandable in a visual manner. This way, the module used the strengths that these students already have

as a starting point. We added three elements to the module that focus on visual communication:

1) A media training in which professionals from the field teach them how to interview for good footage

2) An assignment to create a video item about their target group

3) An assignment to create a '*look and feel'* of their intervention concept (including, preferably, a demo version; pilot or any other tangible expression)

The content and structure of the workshops were also altered. The mandatory literature remained, but the focus in the workshops moved to visual analysis and collaboration skills. Consultancy opportunities were intensified and students could try out more before being graded.

The following section provides a detailed account of these changes to approximate, to the extent possible, the learning experiences of the students. The overall goal of the 6 pilot projects and the long term plan (Bouman, 2004) is to consolidate a systematic place for E-E in Dutch curricula, leading to continuation of the E-E teaching module in Dutch institutions thus furthering the field of E-E in the Netherlands. This continuation can only take place in a structural setting where quality control systems are installed and educational quality is monitored and evaluated. Both the pilot project in all six institutions as well as the specific E-E module in Stenden have been extensively – and positively – evaluated (Stalmeier, 2009; Winkler Prins Postma, 2007; Stenden, 2008).

Simultaneously, it is within these structures teachers and students navigate, interact, negotiate, dialogue, collaborate and in doing so, can actively shape a part of the future E-

E. The structure ensures an overall standard for quality, while within it, on the level of interpersonal interaction, changes take place that either cause a student to shrug over the prospect of putting E-E theory to practice or to become an advocate for the field of E-E. The redesign of the module creates learning *experiences* in a way that students' learning is of personal consequence to them, as is the case for an audience during an E-E intervention. In exploring barriers in their own learning, they witness how small changes in angles to problems, formulations, have great impact on the willingness to cooperate with group members, to reconsider an attitude or to consider doing something new[7].

Bringing in people that make a difference: role models and media training

To present students with interesting role models, experts from outside of Stenden were invited to come to Leeuwarden and share their experiences as guest lecturers and trainers. A choice was made for a balance between people with an academic background and a background in media production. We also made sure these were not largely men. Students found it inspiring to be taught by these representatives of their respective fields because they model professional behaviour (eventually) required of these students. Though Stenden staff could also have provided the transfer of knowledge, the learning effect of these role models moves beyond this transfer: students put extra weight on the words, experience and evaluation of someone from the field. After all, the livelihood of

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[7] In the portrait "Trust is the lubricant of organizational life: lessons from the life and career of Henry Lipmanowicz", Singhal (2006) describes how a single situation can have great consequences; in a phone conversation he had with Lipmanowicz, the latter asks him about the way a workshop Singhal participated in, was designed. "An opportunity lost", is Lipmanowicz's sober conclusion upon hearing the set-up was rather traditional. This brief analysis, and the conversation that followed from it eventually led Singhal to redesign the way he taught courses, creating richer outcomes. As Singhal concludes this section: "A small chit-chat conversation on a […] workshop in Laos creates ripples in a classroom in Athens, Ohio, some 9,000 miles away."(2006, p. 15)

these free lance (media) professionals depends on the quality of their work, which they have to prove everyday. (Teachers generally won't get fired over having a bad day.) Students display great interest in the experience of these experts and make use of the opportunity after lectures to ask questions and run ideas by them.

The media training that is introduced in one of the first weeks of the module is especially important to students. This is a day of intense, hands-on training, in which they experience the excitement of being behind and in front of a camera. Johan de Ligt, production sound mixer, has been a constant factor in these trainings throughout the past six years. Before the training, the module coordinator provides a briefing to the team of media trainers, explaining the purpose of the module and the specific challenges of this group of learners. Johan then coordinates the actual training. The training demonstrates the importance of preparation and research is. In their research, students often have difficulty interviewing for example people from migrant communities. On the one hand this is due to a perceived inaccessibility of this group (Röling, 1989). On the other, it is because of student's shyness. The training day helps them experience how to move beyond this.

One day of media training

In one of the first weeks of the module, a team of media professionals – consisting of a director, a cameraman and a production sound mixer – provides a media training at Stenden. One goal in the training is to demonstrate how important the collaboration between these three parties is. The team brings in their own cameras and audio equipment. The training teaches students to listen closely, reflect on styles of

interviewing and to ask questions on a deeper level. The set up consists of a morning session and an afternoon session. It opens by throwing students into the deep end to see what they learn from it. Through reviewing the recording they made in a spontaneous interview, presenting feedback and receiving tips, they learn the importance of preparation. Then, in the afternoon session, they experience this difference, because during their lunch break they prepare and practice. The recordings in the afternoon session make this difference visible.

During the workshop Johan de Ligt takes the lead in receiving students' feedback, commenting on their questions and connecting practice with theory. The team of professionals has always collaborated with one another in the past. This makes the dynamic interplay in television production visible to the students. Also, these professionals have spent a lot of time working on projects that address socially sensitive topics. The director of the training uses his own experience to illustrate students cannot get to know their target group by staying home. Hearing these trainers tell stories about how they have overcome several barriers creates a sense of comfort as well as a challenge in students. By calling on the memory of their personal learning experiences and awkward moments, students get a clear grip on what is expected of them. The investigative, hands on approach advocated in the training, empowers students to step out of their comfort zone.

The learning experience does not stop with the training day itself, because the target group video items are co-evaluated by the media trainers: they each provide feedback

from their own expertise. The module coordinator writes a report based on their comments and presents these to the students. Students often find these remarks much more important than the grade they receive. A compliment from a media professional has a lot of meaning. All in all, the training helps students to navigate between their roles as creative agents, potential change agents and managers.

Brushing teeth 1) How the tooth brush adventure came to life

For the Municipal health Service, students had to find a way to engage the parents of young children in dental hygiene, specifically parents with a migrant background. They had great trouble finding a way to get in touch with these parents. During the media training, the trainers shared their thoughts on things these students might try and helped them find another angle: why not visit a dentist in the area you're supposed to do the research in and see if they can help you out. With the help of the client's network, they found a dentist that often volunteered for communities in Morocco. He was willing to talk to them and explain the barriers to them.

[insert image of front cover – filename: bookcover_1.bmp]

Figure 1. Front cover of adventure comic: Ali, Timmy, Jessy and the Mouthsters.
Courtesy: Nina Bührs, Jasper Achterberg and Elwin Klappe

While listening to his stories, people from the target group came walking in for their regular check-ups and the group had the opportunity to interview them as well. Doors to their target group were opened, resulting in their intervention plan: a song the children could learn in school and a multilingual adventure comic that took place in the inside of a person's mouth. A multicultural team of superhero children fights off a tooth monster. Children can bring the book home from school and share their learning experience with their parents.

Next to the media training, guest lecturers were scheduled for lectures and workshops. An expert on storytelling may invite students to write segments of stories. Or a cross medial perspective my be practiced by storytelling through different media. Students learn from analyzing several audiovisual examples of video items during workshops. Academic guest lecturers demonstrated how to use small focus group interviews to retrieve life stories.

The workshops not only serve to acquaint students with role models, but also with members of special interest groups. Esther-Clair Sasabone, a public speaker and kidney patient, provides a workshop on ethics. She was involved with BNN's "De Grote Donor Show" – a Dutch television show in which a donor- kidney would supposedly be offered to a candidate chosen by the audience[8]. Esther-Clair discusses the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction and the ethics surrounding it. The workshop sketches vividly what ambiguities rise from the perspective of the target group: the prospect of improvement of the quality of life for yourself and fellow patients by addressing the topic of organ donation, while your misery is used for entertainment purposes. Though students have read academic articles on ethics as preparation for the workshop (e.g. Brown & Singhal, 1990, 1993; Bouman & Brown, 2010), the story around The Big Donor Show catches them off guard, heightening their awareness of their responsibility towards the target

[8] De Grote Donorshow (The Big Donor Show) was a controversial one-time-only reality tv-show by Dutch television broadcasting agency BNN, in which a kidney was said to be donated to one of three candidates. The decision was supposed to be informed by the audience that would get to know the three canditates. Though a hoax in the end, the show recieved initial credibility, because the founder of BNN was a kidney patient who passed away in 2002. The candidates were real, only the donor was an actress. The candidates were in on the hoax.Though the show received an Emmy award for non-scripted entertainment and attracted millions of Dutch viewers, only 7300 people signed up to become organ donor afterwards. http://sites.bnn.nl/page/donorshow, date accessed: February 28, 2012.

group. First, the media training addresses you should never forget the after care for people whose lives you have presented in public. The then workshop reaffirms students' future and current responsibilities.

Leaving the internet and balancing their conscience

One client challenged students to find a way to motivate people to become more engaged with the aim and goals of their organization, This was some time after the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004, where many newspapers reported a misattribution of funding by NGO's: the expenses for overhead exceeded the expenses actually benefiting the communities the NGO aims to serve. These students resisted their assignment, feeling like they'd manipulating their audience into something they were hesitant of themselves.

Though the students addressed their moral concern in a conversation with their client, this offered them no relieve. Their coach then asked them, "who would be the kind of party you would trust to convince you in this matter?" The students mentioned they would trust information that would come from the nation's Minister for Development Cooperation at the time; Bert Koenders: "maybe we should collect some information from his part". Their coach indicated: "well, go ahead and give it a go!". They did and went to the Hague to interview the minister to ask him about their concerns.

The students were actually able to make an appointment for a conversation with the minister. While they sat in the waiting room, next to them a reporter from the BBC waited as well, in a suit. One of the students sat there in his shorts and sneakers and became so nervous about it, he forgot to bring his questions along. They retrieved all the necessary information regardless and included their recordings of their fifteen-minute audience into their video item. The conversation released them of their inhibition and they went on with the development of their intervention.

Allowing learning from mistakes: changes in work forms, coaching and formats

The previous section described the change toward a visual focus and the role of different kinds of professionals in modeling managerial types for the students. We also made the changes in the didactic forms: a) introduction of role playing techniques in the workshops, for interviewing techniques, collaboration and negotiation skills; b) visual analysis of material of previous years; c) storytelling techniques, d) consultancy meetings with their coach to discuss progress and potential pitfalls, e) weekly feedback on draft products.

Role playing sessions (a) proved vital in the prevention of common errors in interviewing techniques. Students' responses to one another were both harsh and constructive. Though they all want to write the best intervention plan ever, they don't want to compete directly with one another. During the consultancy meetings, they will help each other out. At the same time, their standard for quality is outspoken. While analyzing visual material of previous years (b), they express their dissatisfaction with this in sentences like: "I can't believe they would formulate your question like that!" and "How could you not make sure the lighting in that room is better!?" By inviting reflection on these responses, students are sensitized to different points of view and become mindful of their reaction.

Typical dialogue in a role-play practice interview setting in the first week.

Q: Can I ask you some questions regarding your health and lifestyle?
A: Yes, you can
Q: How do you feel about the fact that you don't get enough exercise?

In the feedback it is pointed out to the students that this is what Doe Mayer (USC) refers to as a "you stupid people approach" (E-E DVD Center Media & Health, 2010).

Storytelling techniques are practiced during a workshop in which students analyze the visualization of E-E concepts of previous years (c). Believing you can tell a story in only

pictures is central. They collectively watch a DVD called “Paul and the Dragon”[9]: an animated story of a little boy battling cancer. The clip has no spoken word, but students only realize this during the analysis, when - sometimes in tears because of the touching story – they learn nothing was said for twenty minutes.

Students also have to design a work plan for the full period of nine weeks (d). This plan contains the students’ personal learning goals. Students receive feedback on the enjoyment they anticipate in learning: what will make it more than an item to tick off the list? What makes learning worthwhile and engaging for them? How will they learn from mistakes? And they have to hand in a mandatory draft of an element of their intervention plan every week (e). They receive feedback, not grades. This prevents them from waiting until the last minute to get started on their project, while it allows for learning from their mistakes. From the very first moment, they can improve their ideas and sharpen their thoughts.

The role of the coach is important in this process: the coach makes the connection with the theory without making it feel like their homework is being checked. Students need to pass a test at the end of the module. Without studying the literature, it is unlikely they will pass this test. What the coach does, is enhance the connection students make between practice and theory, between design and execution.

Changes in the output students create

The new design of the module resulted in a change in the professional behaviour students display. They move from ‘wannabe creative’ to ‘manager of creativity’. Managing the

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9 "Paul and the Dragon" (2008), directed by Paco Vink and Albert 't Hooft, Produced by il Luster, the Netherlands.

creative process is an important skill for a future E-E manager, especially since it sometimes requires stepping back and allowing incubation time (Bouman, 1999; 2002). Students used to be tempted to find an excuse to promote the first thing they would come up with. Now they're focused on killing their darlings as they experience the need for it. The making of the target group video item forced them to really look beyond their own assumptions, enhancing their creativity and articulation, while creating something the target group may actually deem worthwhile. Sometimes students are better at making a visual than a verbal impression. The shift towards a visual mode of expression enhances their potential for verbal expression: their reports are strengthened through this and even their skills in formulating clearly improve. In making it, they see how they can manage it.

Brushing teeth 2) How the tooth brush song came to life

The adventure comic group asked: "can we not just recommend to write song about it?" Their coach responded: if you stick to the level of recommendation rather than execution, you will not make a difference in your presentation of the concept. She was right. Now, the parents and children would actually have a song to sing together.

[insert image of song cover – filename: CDCover_Bunny]

Figure 2. CD Cover of the Toothbrush Song:
"Brushing teeth is fun!"
Sung by Lala the Little Rabbit

In the sixth week of the module, students pitch their raw concept for their intervention in a group meeting consisting of their peers and coaches. The meeting is in time to make fundamental alterations in the concept, if required. The pitch is also the litmus test to see if they've really understood the E-E strategy. The key question always turns out to be:

“do you think this is something your target group would actually go out and do for their own enjoyment, for fun?”

We can’t ask them this question in the beginning of the module. Students are wrapped up in making sense of all the theory and connecting the dots. Yet, this turns out to be the main challenge in the concepts they develop: *does the intended, initial learning take place within the moment of entertainment?* Students sometimes think of a way for their target group to have a good time, but then don’t always connect this to the actual theme of their assignment. They’ll hand out a brochure, unrelated to the entertainment, as if they sweet-talked or tricked their target group into learning something. We ask them: *where did the fun go?*

After the pitch, students have a few more weeks to prepare their final presentation. For this, they head off to Gouda, where the Center for Media & Health is based. The location creates a special vibe. Now they go to the heart of the expertise, where all the clients gather as well. The students make a three-hour trip from Leeuwarden to Gouda, often fully dressed for the occasion. The trip itself is also part of the preparatory ritual for the presentations, as students rehearse their formulation and wording, check again and again whether they brought all the needed equipment and back-ups. One student would even bring along extra sets of panty hoses for her female colleagues just in case. Once the train arrived, passers by in Gouda could witness a cheerful lot of well-dressed students almost walking in single file to the location of CMH.

Challenges for the following years

For the continuation of the module, the following years will bring several changes that are promising as well as challenging for the way the module is taught. One of them is technological: the rise of new media technologies that have an impact on many different levels, to begin with a) the stronger potential for the diffusion of the field of Entertainment-Education, b) different opportunities for collaboration on E-E projects in space and time, c) the rise of new entertainment formats that are truly cross medial, d) the rise of but also the quest for new methodologies to study the impact of these new entertainment formats, e) changes in the way people communicate, with a renewed focus on dialogue and the quest for a new balance between transmission based communication and interaction based communication and f) the consequences of the technology for the way people collect and diffuse information in learning settings.

On the one hand, we need to account for these elements in the module because our students need to learn how to develop cross media concepts and how to research the effects of these. On the other hand, as teachers, we need to be aware that this generation of students has a different approach to knowledge and a different style of gathering information. The module is now offered in the international curriculum of Media & Entertainment Management (since 2011), creating on the one hand a cross-cultural vibe in the hallways of Stenden, but at the same time posing challenges for international collaboration: how to engage with a client from abroad while the international students – for the time being – are based in the Netherlands? What E-E themes are universal to the extent that a – research-based – concept for them can be developed in the Netherlands,

yet transported to another country? The assignments may be formulated differently for the international students with international clients. How to maintain the same standards for the assessment of the module? With the increase in the amount of students that take part in the module, more teachers are needed. How to ensure additional training and feedback opportunities for new teachers, when timetables in higher education are always fully booked?

Also, while 'dialogue' is now one of the keywords of communication through social media, teaching is often based on linear transmission models from one to many, e.g. through lectures. Both students and teachers are now exploring community based, dialogical styles of teaching and learning. But teachers' attempts to transcend (rather than discard) their old ways need to be balanced in a way that's close enough to students' experience with the way they were taught to learn – without alienating them, while at the same time finding an opening into new ways of working, learning and collaborating that are at the same time fun and serious. Though students are now trained in collaborative learning, they still need an 'expert'-perspective to guide them.

The authority of this expert, however, can't be based on privileged knowledge anymore: information is ubiquitous and – with 'sharing' as another keyword, knowledge is worth more when it is put to practice by a community. Guidance of students therefore needs to be based on the potential to challenge the thinking of students, but without doing away with knowledge altogether. Though to some extent the information age has led some to believe all knowledge is fleeting, it is not unimportant. If so, the whole enterprise of

doing research turns into an act of futility. Yet we need to develop a way of creating fruitful learning environments in which the authority of an expert lies in the capacity of empowering students to transcend the current knowledge. As a Chinese saying will have it: it is not honouring to the master to remain his student forever. We can only develop if we learn from the students we once taught: our students and alumni keep us posted on new developments and challenges via social media and some drop by as guest lecturers. We need not to give up our quest for knowledge, but rather the authority that used to stem from having a final answer, or as a teacher sometimes, from having a final say. A trend we witness among students is that they don't want to work in a so-called 'degradation-entertainment' economy (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). But maybe teachers could learn they don't always get away with boredom-education either. The future of the field of E-E is connected to us, asking ourselves: where would the fun go?

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