WDK.A

EXPERIMENT

2022.23

THiS iS HOW iT STARTED

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We are a team of theory teachers with the illustration department of the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. With around three hundred students across four years, illustration is one of the larger majors at the institute.

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In theory classes students learn knowledge and skills that allow them to contextualise their practice.

In 2021, at the height of the Corona crisis, we had a discussion with our students about inclusivity and diversity of our theory classes. We decided to use their feedback for an experiment trying to improve our teaching methods and material.

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We found out that not every student felt comfortable to participate in our weekly sessions. How can we include this group? How can we facilitate a safe learning environment for all the different students: visual or verbal thinkers, introvert students and or students with divergent opinions? What strategies can we apply, what new approaches can we think of?

How can we involve as many students as possible?

OUR GOALS

Create a more democratic teaching process
Actively involve students and their ideas
Giving students ownership over
their learning process
Connect better with student's experience

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OUR PLANS

Co-teaching
Collective knowledge building
Close collaboration between teachers
Creating an accountable space
Workforms to encourage (all) students to
particpate

WHAT WE DID

Finding specialist literature
Looking for best practices
Creating new working methods
Thinking of new ways of teaching
Interviewing students
Creating a code of conduct collectively
Testing in class and collecting evidence
Implementing results

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In this presentation you will find a description of the different experiments and approaches we tried in the last months of 2022, especially with first year students of illustration: we wrote a code of conduct with the students; students made their media diary; they made a comic and held a debate. In all chapters we will also present our findings and we close with our general conclusions.

CLAUSES

1. Don't judge people based of looks, ethnicity, gender, sexuality et cetera +30
2. Don't gatekeep! if you find useful resources, share them with others, don't be bitter +19
3. Keep in mind that being in a school environment can be intimidating and scary to some people so do not judge people's reactions, nerves or fears. Give out love & kindness +16
4. Staff members and students treat each other with respect +13
5. Work with a community spirit, not a competitive one +13
6. Don't give feedback when someone isn't asking for it +7
7. Don't interrupt others+7
8. Respect each other's boundaries +7
9. Help someone who struggles with a problem and understand other perspectives +8
10. If someone gets red or stumbles while speaking, don't judge. Help your classmates when you notice they need it or struggle. Make sure that other students have time and opportunities to participate in discussion Give room to the more quiet /reserved people among us to express themselves and be a part of the conversation. +4

(+ stands for the number of votes for a clause)

CODE OF CONDUCT

In September 2022, at the beginning of the year we created a code of conduct. During the term we wanted to refer back to this code. All students could add a clause through Etherpad. They could also vote for the already added clauses.
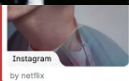
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OBSERVATIONS

Almost the same rules were suggested in each of our three classes. Sometimes rules are contradictory reflecting different opinions among students – and pointing out that it is hard to make everybody happy. The tutors did not suggest any rules. Perhaps this is an idea. During the term the code got forgotten and was seldomly referred to.

ADVICE

The tutor organizes the clauses in categories and let the class talk about them. Like in real life people want different things and you have to work together. So can we reformulate the clauses, or have more clarification on what is really meant. An accountable space is important here. Make sure to implement the Code and remind students of it.

Instagram
by netflix

⚠ saved for inspo

dear diary dear diary dear diary dear

ear diary dear diary dear diary dear

instagram.com
by foam_amsterdam

instagram.com
by hokanobunobu

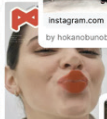NOSTALGIC PHOTOS
FROM THE 90S ALT SCENE

instagram.com
by dazedbeauty

instagram.com
by alexandremattiussi9

instagram.com
by thepopmag

ultramode!

instagram.com

instagram.com
by anothermagazine

How I made an animated

instagram.com
by 9gag

Instagram
by love.watts

instagram.com
by jewelryslang

instagram.com
by anothermagazine

Instagram
by jeanpaulgaultier

ear diary dear diary dear diary dear

What I like
according to internet
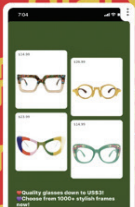
Emma

50%

Meet
over
1500
designers

BERNDNAUT SMILDE
SPECIAL EDITION

24 HRS ONLY! 8/9 SEPT
FROM 12.00 CET
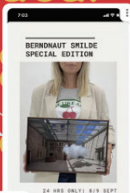
Come to the
leading Expat Fair
in the Netherlands!

€21
per uur

temper

Senior Marketing Specialist in NL
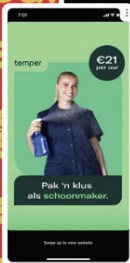
Pak 'n klus
als schoonmaker.

Love can do many things but it can't do
everything and neither can our
partners. Love is an ongoing
collaboration, and it takes everyone to
sustain and grow it.

Sign up for my free toolkit and learn
how to navigate this paradox to build a
life story with your partner.

Painting
Artist with synaesthesia p
Greta Thunberg's Davos
speech on canvas

Oppas nodig om te
helpen met de
kinderen?

Sit&

What I chose to see
(maybe)?

ATHECO

THESE DAYS
THEY WILL GAI
ANYTHING
OVERSHIRTS.
THESE ARE
ACTUALLY THE

better
future
now
festival

ear diary dear diary dear diary dear
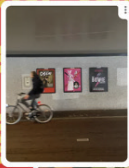
MEDIA DIARY

We thought of a media diary to connect theory with practice. Students had to keep a diary of all media they consumed in one specific day. This to create awareness of how media can be a source of inspiration for their work in school and how to critically reflect on their used sources, a skill practiced in theory. Every lesson, from September to December started with the presentation of two or three diaries.

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OBSERVATIONS

The diaries were not complete, because students did not record all media.
Students preferred cool, artsy sites and media, but mostly missed common media as advertisements (analogue and digital). Students started to window-dress: their diaries reflected their interests and identity.

At a certain point the reflections were about how much time they spend on social media and how bad they felt about this. The presentation became a public confession.
Some students thought they could master the algorithm, which is testimony of an unrealistic, even overconfident and reckless idea of the workings of social media.
The presentations took increasingly time away from the lessons.
Unintended but practical: we could check their diary while grading their practice project: it gave an insight in what a student encounters.
Not all tutors were aware of the existence of the media diary.

CONCLUSION

Interesting results, but not what we aimed for. Social media usage was not the thing we wanted students to become aware of. Window dressing is typical and could be something to discuss.
It is still worth to experiment further.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

* Make the formal requirements of the assignment more clear.
* Let all tutors of the department know about the media diary to improve the connection between the media consumption and your output.
* Consider different forms of presenting the media diary. Maybe not in front of the class; a first year student needs to settle in a group. Some may feel vulnerable to be completely honest about their media consumption.
* Connect the media diary to another assignments and or ask students to make the connection in the reflection.
* Let tutors do the first presentation of their media diary so students have an example.

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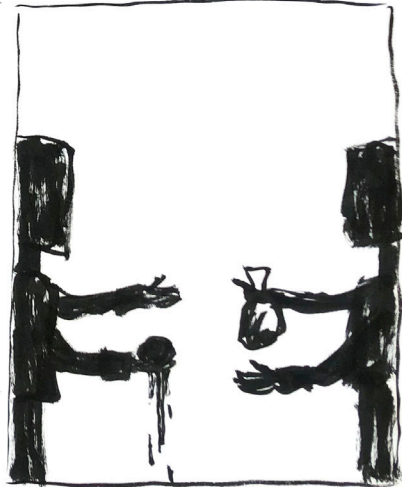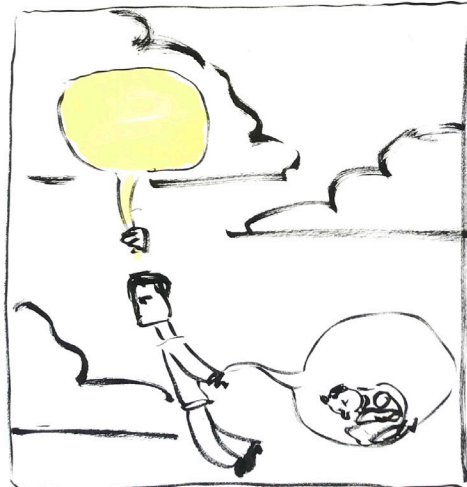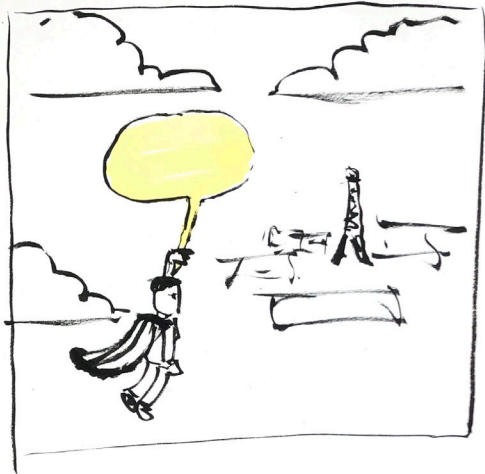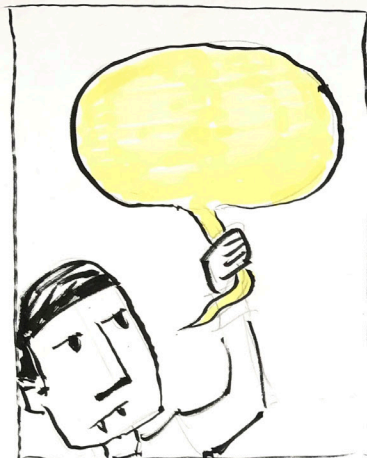
COMICS

We wanted to create a way of visual reflection instead of oral or written reflection; to create a connection between theory and practice; and to find out to what extend the learning objectives of that day were achieved. The students were asked to adapt the lesson to a comic. Incidentally the lesson, November 15, 2022, was about comics (its history, development and actual trends).
Every student had to write down ten key terms that summarized the lesson. Then discuss with four colleagues which ten words out of forty best represent the class and use those to make a comic with four panels.

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RESULTS

A few words are recurring: sequential, character, gutter, continue (or: to be continued). Most words in the list are about the beginning of the lesson. Some lists contain words that were not uttered during class, like "chronological difference".
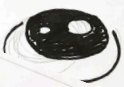
OBSERVATIONS

During the first part of the exercise the students were very quiet. To see what would happen, the tutor left the room but found them still at work on his return. He invited them to engage in discussion and convert the words into images.

There and then the experiment derailed because there was hardly a connection between the key terms or even between the lesson and the comics. The students however showed more ambition in creating an interesting contribution, some even stayed until after class to finish their page.

The comics were funny, but most did not connect to the teaching material.

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DEBATE

During the class on November 29, 2022, we experimented with two forms of debate. We had discussed some controversial art pieces and used these to formulate different opinions. E.g., artworks depicting sex (and or sexualizing nudity) should not be exhibited in public buildings.

The students were free to choose one of two forms of debate. In room 1 the class was split in two: in favor or against. You had to stand up to give voice to your opinion and address the tutor who moderated the debate, this to avoid arguments getting too personal and feeling like personal attacks. You can switch sides, so one side could win over the other side. In room 2 students worked in groups of three and create two posters one in pro and one con (a statement). The posters were not necessarily their opinion. Then the posters were shared with other groups to see what arguments their colleagues had.

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WHY

Creating spaces where students feel comfortable sharing their opinion. We used the theory of Ebbens and Ettekoven (described in Effectief leren, Noordhoff Uitgevers, 2016) and their four step structure of asking questions. Giving students time to think of arguments before starting a discussion creates a more comfortable atmosphere and creates individual accountability.

In room 1, students that have no problem voicing their opinion in front of a group and stepping up, could have their debate.

In room 2, students that are more introvert or do not feel comfortable speaking in front of a group, and perhaps need more time to overthink their arguments can debate. The threshold to speak in a smaller group is lower, and giving students time to think about their arguments also help to make them feel comfortable (safe learning environment) and to give everyone a change to think about the matter (individual responsibility/ accountability).

These two factors have also proven to be important in the motivations of students (Ettekoven, p. 26)

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OBSERVATIONS

Most students chose the debate in room 1. Most students did not know a lot about an issue, if it all, but this did not withhold them from voicing strong and explicit opinions after they were briefed. After the sessions they asked if we could do this again soon.

Students were comfortable they could choose a debate form.

In room 2 students felt at ease giving their opinion in small groups. Swapping the posters between groups helped to learn other points of view.

In the survey we did afterwards students showed themselves very content with this form of teaching.

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NEXT TIME

More time to get acquainted with a topic for a more profound and meaningful discussion.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Start as early in the term as possible experimenting

Communicate as a team, lay out a road map and talk about the results

Co teaching is a good idea when you work in groups or split the class; less effective when the teachers are both in the same role, lessons tend to get too packed.

Find literature to ground your experiment (and understand the results)

Be flexible

Don't forget to reflect throughout the process