Reality Versus Authenticity: Mapping the Scaffolding Needs for Teaching Intellectual Skills for Working in Television

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Abstract

A number of elements of scaffolding are identified that contribute to the operationalization of real world video production projects as authentic learning environments in which students can learn the intellectual television production skills necessary for working in the television industry. Three key elements are identified. Firstly projects must be smaller in scale than 'expressive-art' video production projects, to allow for staff involvement in areas of production such as working with clients, identifying audiences and preparing a number of cuts. Secondly, before students become involved, staff must clearly identify the stakeholders from the client organisation and the university, their roles and responsibilities, deadlines, resource availability, and conflict resolution procedures. Thirdly, staff must take on some level of producing responsibility on the projects.

Training students to work in television

The Bachelor of Creative Industries (Television) was introduced to Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 2004 with the explicit intention of training students to work in the intellectual jobs involved in the production of mainstream entertainment television programming. This includes jobs such as researchers, writers, script editors, and producers (line, segment, co-, executive, etc), on a career path that leads to the higher level intellectual jobs in the industry such as schedulers, programmers and commissioning editors.

This involves teaching students a number of skills which have not traditionally been part of university Film and Television degrees. These are the intellectual skills used in the industry itself. Initial industry research (McKee, 2005) had identified a number of such skill sets:

- Knowledge of television programs and industry– history of programs, what succeeds on television, and the culture of the industry

- Business skills – including an understanding of television as an industry, sourcing and managing funding, project management

- Interpersonal skills – groupwork, leadership and communication

- Research and writing skills

- Critical and creative thinking

- Networking skills.

Teaching Film and Television at universities has traditionally focused on film at the expense of television. When television production skills are taught, they tend to be technical skills – camerawork, editing, lighting, sound – rather than intellectual skills – understanding audience demographics, finding funding, a strong understanding of the history of successful television genres and popular programs.

The fact that there exists no strong tradition of teaching these intellectual Television skills in Film and Television at University is both a negative and a positive thing. While obviously it meant that we couldn't draw on the lessons of previous educators, it also meant that we had great flexibility as we designed programs for doing so.

It was obvious that we should take an authentic learning approach to teaching these skills for two reasons. Firstly, QUT is branded as a 'university for the real world'. This context provided us with an excellent opportunity to explore authentic learning environments for the students in the BCI(TV). Secondly, we were explicitly attempting to move beyond simply teaching students how to use cameras and editing suites for their own self-expression, and rather to provide them with a sense of the industrial context within which films and television programs are made in the real world. We were thus interested right from the start in 'knowledge as the working practices of a domain' (the television industry) – which is part of Clayden et al's (1994: 172)definition of authentic learning.

What follows are three case studies – accounts of experiments undertaken within the degree to find ways to allow students to work as producers, and to develop a number of these intellectual skills. As Herrington and Herrington (2006a: x) note: 'The concept of authentic learning is not new. However its practice in higher education is arbitrary and undefined'. At the same time, Tochon (2000: 337) has argued for the need to: 'highlight the discipline' in discussions of authentic learning. Tochon (2000: 334) argues that: 'each discipline [should be] viewed through the lens of how it should be taught and learned according to its specificity'. We have thus begun to see the emergence of work which presents case studies of the application of authentic learning principles across diverse university disciplines. The current paper should be seen as a contribution to this project – and in particular, as a response to Herrington and Herrington's excellent 2006 collection (especially Fitzsimmons, 2006, which offers a rare insight into authentic learning within the humanities). Little has been written on the attempts of tertiary educators in the area of Television to operationalise authentic learning. Hopefully these case studies will provide some useful information for anybody else embarking on such a project.

In the three projects described we were attempting to create small-scale, real-world projects with an external client for whom students would produce a video project. These projects aimed to provide an authentic learning environment in which students could develop skills particularly under two of the headings that our research had identified as important for working in television:

- Knowledge of television programs and industry– history of programs, what succeeds on television, and the culture of the industry

The key elements here were the importance of the client and of deadlines. In most Film and Television degrees, students are encouraged to produce artworks, in the sense that they are encouraged to see their productions as a means of self-expression. By contrast, for students interested in working in the television industry, it is vital that they learn to think about the audience and the demands of the client, as much as about self-expression. They must learn to take feedback and deal with it constructively. They must learn to work within parameters set by a client, and to follow deadlines rigorously.

- Business skills – including an understanding of television as an industry, sourcing and managing funding, project management

Here, we wanted students to understand particularly the importance of taking responsibility in project management. This was a key issue if they intend to work as producers. Producers are the people who bear the brunt of ensuring that a project is completed on time. We wanted to provide them with a learning environment in which there was a genuine risk of failure – if they did not take responsibility for completing the project, then it would not be completed, and a client would be let down. This was perhaps the most challenging and difficult aspect of the design of these projects.

The key learning outcomes we sought in offering students these learning opportunities were the ability to meet deadlines, and to take responsibility for ensuring that a project is completed. The key criterion in this analysis of the success or failures of these projects then becomes whether or not they were completed on time, and to the clients' specifications.

At this point in their degrees, students had already completed a number of units where they developed the skills needed for these projects – particularly, an understanding of the television industry, project management for a television production, and interpersonal skills – in safer, more managed environments. They had been introduced to teamwork skills in the unit 'Foundations of Film and Television Production'; and project management skills in the unit 'Film and Television Production Resource Management'. These introductory level units had involved the production of creative materials (respectively, a short video, and a scene breakdown for a film or television project). In addition, students do a number of 'core' Creative Industries Faculty units which also build on key transferable skills.

Those previous units had employed a variety of authentic learning approaches, including authentic assessments. But students had not been required to take responsibility for a real project in any of them.

Model 1: Real world client, staff executive producer, individual student producer and director

Description

Our first model for authentic learning for the students in the Television degree involved the production of a corporate video. The client was the local marketing manager of a large company who wanted to produce a corporate video.

A staff member worked as the executive producer and, in initial meetings with the client, discussed some ideas for the project, but did not set down any firm structures. We appointed one student to work as the producer and one as the director of the project. They were introduced to the client, and provided with a staff contact within the university whose job in part involved putting together crews of undergraduate students, as well as having strong industry links. The students had access to the university's equipment (which is of high quality).

The staff member working as executive producer felt that the students should have control over the project and took a hands-off approach, while making clear that he was available for advice and information at any point in the process. The students were asked (in consultation with staff) to put together their own crew for the project from their peers. They were provided with introductory paperwork laying out the details of the project, and the current situation. They were provided with contact details for the client, and for their Executive Producer, and university staff liaisons. They were invited to contact staff members with relevant expertise (for example, scriptwriting) for advice and support.

Unfortunately, the students were not able to deliver the product under this model. Ultimately responsibility for completion was taken over by an industry partner, and the students worked on the video, but not in the senior leadership roles that had originally been envisaged for them.

Analysis

In this case study, as in all of our attempts to create authentic learning environments that allowed students to develop the intellectual skills for working in television, the key issue that emerged was that of *reality* versus *authenticity*.

As Stein et al (2004:239) note: 'tensions can emerge between providing real-world "natural" experiences and the nature of experiences that are possible to offer within institutions, which can often be "artificial" or "staged"'. However, several researchers have noted that this is not, in itself, a problem. Not only is it impossible for any authentic learning to present an exact simulacrum of a workplace, it is in fact undesirable that it do so. Were the university setting to exactly reproduce the workplace, it would not necessarily provide a supportive environment for learning: 'learning activities are designed to give students "real-world" experiences but protect them from harmful or irrelevant elements that could impede, rather than support, their learning' (Stein, Isaacs and Andrews, 2004: 240). As Cronin (1993: 78) notes: 'the concept of authenticity exists on a continuum', and we can offer students learning environments which are more or less authentic, even if we never reproduce a workplace exactly. 'The concept [of authenticity] is relative' and we can create 'reasonable approximations' (Gordon, 1998: 392) of the real world in our teaching. And indeed, Herrington and Herrington (2006b: 3) note that: 'research into the realism of learning environments has indicated that maximum fidelity, either in real situations or simulations, does not necessarily lead to maximum effectiveness in learning, particularly for novice learners'.

The question then was to what extent we should set up a real project in order to deliver authentic learning?

For example, it would have been possible for us to simulate a real-world situation, with teachers taking on the roles of clients and providing feedback as would happen in the real world.

There were a number of reasons that we decided not to do this, but rather to aim for real world clients and real world projects.

Firstly, as Oliver, Herrington and Reeves (2006: 502)note: 'There is increasing evidence that in order to fully engage with an authentic task of problem-based scenario, students need to engage with a process that is called the *suspension of disbelief*. It had been our experience in previous teaching that students were literally *disbelieving* about the information they were given by staff members about the constraints of working in television – particularly, the tight time scales, the amount of control exercised by the client, the privileging of the audience in discussions of content, the generic demands of production, the number of drafts and cuts required, the number of meetings involved, and the amount of organization and work involved in producing even the smallest scale project. Despite the fact that many staff in the Film and TV area at QUT have extensive industry experience, students refused to believe their accounts of how the industry worked. Bringing in an external client seemed to be the best way to reinforce the real world nature of this information.

Secondly, the Television degree at QUT is staffed with a mixture of academically and industrially trained teachers. In all of our attempts to model real world situations, one important element has been the involvement of real-world clients. Unfortunately, academic teachers of television do not have a strong track record in understanding the intellectual work that is involved in the production of television, tending instead to grant the agency of content production in television to broad social forces such as 'ideology' and 'hegemony'. Too often when educators take on these roles, they give quite the wrong impression about the kind of feedback that will be given on real world productions in the television industry. Lund (1998: 79), for example, encourages educators to put together an audience for students work, of other educators and administrators, in order to: 'enforce demands

for propriety and good taste' in their artistic expression. This is not part of an authentic learning situation for working in television or mainstream film – indeed, it is close to being the exact opposite. Similarly, although Bell-Metereau (1999: 108) notes that 'the teacher's function is comparable to that of both producer and distributor', when she goes on to describe these roles, she doesn't include any conception of knowing and promoting what will sell to a mainstream audience.

Thirdly, one of the key elements of authentic learning identified by Oliver, Herrington and Reeves (2006: 505), is that an authentic activities: 'create polished products valuable in their own right rather than as preparation for something else'

However, our attempts to integrate these real world clients into authentic learning situations have caused problems.

Herrington and Oliver (2000) identify nine key elements of authentic learning activities. Many of these were unproblematic in this project. The activity itself was authentic, and matched up with the 'community of practice' that they will be working in (see Stein, Isaacs and Andrews, 2004: 241).

Second, the activities should take place in an authentic social context – this should also attempt to match the future workplace, as these projects did.

Third, assessment should also be 'authentic', and match the professional skills students will be expected to show in the workplace, with attention to an authentic context (Herrington and Herrington, 1998: 309). Students here were assessed on the outcome of the production against criteria of professional practice.

In learning from these authentic situations, fourth, students should have access to expert performances, showing them how current practitioners solve the problems they are facing. Here, they had access both to industry professionals and to educators trained in the relevant area, both with and without industry experience. This also addressed the fifth point – that they should have access to multiple perspectives, 'providing a multitude of perspectives to enable students to examine problems from the point of view of a variety of stakeholders' (Herrington and Herrington, 2006b: 6).

Sixth, they should construct knowledge collaboratively, allowing them to 'solve a problem together' (Roschelle and Behrend, quoted in Herrington and Herrington, 2006b: 6). This was the case in this project.

Seventh, the teacher should provide coaching and scaffolding that supports the students in their learning. This was the key problematic element in the process, as discussed below.

Eighth, students should be asked to reflect on, and then, ninth, to articulate, what they have learned from the authentic activities (Herrington and Oliver, 2000: 25-26). This was also included in the project, through the inclusion of a reflective piece of writing by students on what they had learned from the experience as an assessment point.

The key issue that emerged for us, then, was about scaffolding. This was a key point where the fracture between reality and authenticity became clear.

As noted above, one of the key elements that we wanted to build into this learning environment for students was responsibility; which included also the risk of failure. This project, for a real world client, was the responsibility of the students. It would not be a sandpit, a project designed by a staff member for them to play in. And it would not be run by a staff member, with the students working under them. The students themselves would have to take responsibility for bringing the project to completion.

But this did not produce the authentic learning experience that we had hoped for. Reality did not provide authenticity for the students' learning. On the criteria of taking responsibility for completing the project and doing so to a given deadline and to a client's specifications, as noted above, the students failed to meet our desired learning outcomes.

There were problems with the project design. This is not surprising, given that this was a first attempt to introduce authentic learning activities that modeled high level intellectual skills involved in the production of television into an undergraduate university degree, and there is thus little existing research on how to operationalize authentic learning in this specific university context.

We learned, in particular, that there are some elements of the structure for a project which students cannot design for themselves. There were problems with the relationship between the students and one of the staff members they had to work with, and their conflict management and leadership skills had not been sufficiently developed to allow them to deal assertively with the situation. The students dealt bravely with this, and in communications with all stakeholders were polite, friendly and tried to push for the outcomes we needed. But unfortunately we had not put in place a scaffolding structure that made clear exactly what were the roles and responsibilities of both the students, the clients and all of the staff members involved. There were not clearly articulated structures for responsibilities, and the students did not feel that they had the authority to create these for themselves and put them in place.

Students cannot negotiate the initial contact with the client – as they do not speak with the authority of the university, and cannot offer the client the proposition that work can be done for university credit. They are not authorized to offer the client access to the university's resources. Another element of the structure that has to be defined before the students come on board is the roles and responsibilities of the non-student members of the project. Staff and associated industry practitioners need to understand clearly what their role is on the project, and what the chain of command is on the project – who is the authorizing officer for each stakeholder? Who is authorized to okay an idea?

This is a central issue when we are trying to teach students to be producers. Ultimately we would like students to be able to take on these high-level organizational roles, and the responsibility that they entail. Throughout our attempts to model authentic learning for television producing we have come up against this same conundrum: how do we match the teaching situation (in which we are bound ethically, and by student and parent expectation, to provide a safe learning experience) with the requirement that students learn to take responsibility for projects – with the concomitant risk that they may actually fail? I return to this discussion below.

Similarly, although it is not an absolute rule, we found that students were not comfortable setting their own deadlines for projects. It was better if the client, the basic brief and the deadline were in place before the students came on board. The students did not feel comfortable with the level of project management involved in finding a student crew to work with them. Although they had been told earlier in their study about the responsibilities of each of the jobs, they found it too overwhelmingly to step into these senior roles, taking responsibility for meeting with the client, for organizing the crew and the shoot.

After this experience we understood that students would need more guidance, support and modeling – more teaching, as it were – in how to take the abstract information about how a producer and director work, and operationalize that on a day to day basis. Means of support that we could explore included providing more detailed breakdowns of subtasks within the roles of producing and directing; and regular expert modeling from a teacher with producing and directing experience who could solve problems with them and demonstrate possible solutions and practices for them.

We also found that in developing the timeline for production – the subtasks to be completed along the way – students may require some expert modeling. They tend to underestimate the amount of time needed for each element of the task (eg, shooting material). And they often don't know that some elements of the task even exist (for example, preparing a rough cut for the client, and then making a revised cut based on client feedback).

On this same point, it became clear that it is necessary to have regular – at least weekly – meetings with the students at which timelines can be checked according to expert judgments about the speed with which productions need to progress; and any problems can be addressed.

The third key lesson from this first attempt at authentic learning was the importance of the scale of a production. Placing two students on a project for credit, and requiring them to find other students to work on it (even with staff support for doing this) overwhelmed the students. They told me that they found the project daunting and that they had difficulty engaging with it. This has become another central issue for us in trying to teach the real world of television (and mainstream film) production.

Think of it this way. It is possible for a single artist to produce a piece of video art working by themselves over the space of a few days. They can easily produce 100 minutes of video art in under a week, single-handed. By contrast, to produce a mainstream movie takes several hundred staff working over a period of at least several months in order to produce 100 minutes of screentime. The teaching of television and film production in schools and universities has tended towards the former model – encouraging students to see themselves as expressive artists. By contrast, the reason it takes so many people working for so long on the production of mainstream entertainment is that there is much more quality control. At every level, from the development of the concept to the writing of the script, development of the storyboard, putting together the crew, experimenting with production design, possible looks for costumes, make-up, sets, special effects, casting, lighting - there are checks where external reviewers look at the product and ask whether it works for an audience.

In order to move towards authentic learning of how mainstream film and television is produced, we had to move away from the model of artistic expression, and towards the mainstream model. Two students working alone were simply not able to bring to bear the sheer amount of time and work involved when a real-world client becomes involved in the mix, in terms of the time involved in meeting and dealing with the client, dealing with the feedback from the client and – finally and crucially – in producing a professional level product where a key determinant of success for the project was not only whether the students felt that they had successfully expressed themselves, but whether an external client, judging the project against real-world professional criteria, thought it was good enough. This was an unreal expectation on our part in designing this unit. Our realization from this first project was that we needed to do smaller projects, with many more students working on them.

Model 2: Real world clients, staff executive producer, group of student producer/writers and directors, student crew.

Description

The second model for an authentic project involved the production of three Community Service Announcements for the local community television channel. The initial contact was made between the Executive Producers at the university and at the community television channel. The students then had the responsibility of dealing with the community television channel to secure the details of the groups for whom they would be making the CSAs. Three student producers and three student directors were appointed. The crew this time was to be appointed by staff from a group of enrolled students in another unit who would get credit for the work. There were thus a greater number of students involved.

A staff member worked as executive producer, and organized weekly meetings with the producers for the project. The producers were told that they were responsible for meeting with the directors and the producers and running the projects. The staff member did not drive the project but rather provided a structure within which students could work. In this second model students were provided with more detailed information – including a detailed breakdown of the sub-tasks involved in their jobs, and a series of readings, talks and discussions about elements of their jobs. They were also given suggested dates for completing the list of subtasks involved in the production of the CSAs. As the staff member was not driving the project, he checked at the weekly meetings whether the tasks were completed on time, but did not take responsibility for ensuring that those dates were met if the task was clearly not going to be completed on time – as indeed, several were not. Rather, he offered advice and support, and made himself available outside of class time for this.

Analysis

Once again, student learning outcomes of taking responsibility for completing a project, and doing so to a given deadline and to the satisfaction of an external client, were not met. None of the three CSAs was delivered to the community television broadcaster. There were several issues. Problems in the initial set up meant that the students were not matched with their clients until several weeks into semester. The students then insisted that the timelines for the production – which had been prepared and checked by industry professionals – were not realistic, and that they would not work to them. There were problems with the relationships between some of the students and the community television broadcasters, and between the students themselves. Staff stepped in to attempt to deal with these conflicts, modeling conflict resolution behaviour – but once again it seemed that the students were overwhelmed by the scale of the project and found it too daunting.

Again, we were exploring the ways in which we could operationalise authentic learning of key skills such as taking responsibility for a project, managing a production, and liaising with clients. Again, there were unexpected challenges involved in bringing in real-world elements that didn't automatically lead to an authentic learning experience, as we had hoped they would.

We had taken on board the lessons learned in relation to Herrington and Oliver's (2006) seventh key element of authenticity – the necessity of scaffolding. But it was interesting to see that we were still underestimating the amount of scaffolding that was needed for such a project.

The first key lesson that we learned from this project was, once again, that the scale of the projects could not be too large. Although the productions were only three CSAs of thirty seconds each, each of the CSAs also involved meeting with a client, dealing with the needs of that client, and attempting to produce material to a standard professional enough to satisfy a real world client. Although we had intended that the students would work as a group of three on all three CSAs, thus providing peer support and feedback, they decided (without reference to staff) to work as individuals, taking one CSA each. We were thus back at the situation where a single student was producing each project. The failure to complete the project suggests that this did not work well.

I would draw this out as the second key lesson from this experience: the need for teamwork in order to provide students with peer support. I suspect that the choice by the students to move from teamwork to individual projects is part of the reason that they felt overwhelmed by the project. Students are taught teamwork in other units in their degree. It is necessary to make clear to the students that they are working in teams on their authentic projects.

A third key point once again is about scaffolding: the need for a structure of responsibility to be put in place before students become involved addressing the roles and relationships of those stakeholders over whom students do not, and cannot have, control – the real world clients, and the university staff who will be working with them. A problem arose in the course of production when the clients for the project were uncertain about who should be the authorized officer for one of the

CSAs, resulting in confusing feedback to the students. When working with real world clients, it is necessary for university staff to ensure that the procedures for communication are clearly structured before students become involved.

Model 3: Real world client, staff producers and directors, student researchers, writers and crew

Description

The third, and most successful, model for an authentic project involved the production of a series of short (one minute) 'blipcoms' (or 'mobisodes') of a comedy program for distribution on mobile phones. The external client here was initially the Australian telecommunications company Vodafone. It later changed when the product was taken up by the distribution arm of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The project involved nineteen students. It took place over two semesters rather than one. Less material was produced than in the first project – a total of eleven minutes. The project was overseen in a more structured way by a staff member. And the structure for the project was developed more fully before the students became involved.

The idea was to try to produce a realistically sized project that could be made by students, to a standard that was professional enough to sell to an external client.

Working within these criteria, a staff member came up with the idea of producing mobile phone content on the basis that this was an emerging market for alternative forms of product, including extremely short-form content such as 'mobisodes'. The cohort of students worked together with the staff in a highly structured team environment to explore various possible genres, and to look at which genres were most successful in encouraging 'revisiting' (for example, which sold most DVDs). Settling on the idea of a dark comedy, students then devised and pitched ideas for a mobile phone 'sitcom' series of one-minute episodes, working within set and budget restrictions. The staff member worked with an industry colleague to choose the most suitable idea for development. The staff member then developed the concept and students wrote the scripts for the episodes; the staff member script edited these.

Several staff members then worked together to pitch the idea to Vodafone, who liked the idea and asked to see a pilot.

In the second stage, the blipcoms went into production, with the students working as the crew in the university's television studio. A staff member worked as the producer on the project. Professional directors from the industry were brought in for the students to work with, modeling professional behaviour for them.

Analysis

In one way, this was the most successful attempt at authentic learning. It met the learning outcomes of completing the project to a given deadline, and to a client's satisfaction. However – this was achieved in a way which may have compromised the desire to allow students to act as producers by taking responsibility for the completion of the project. The students were involved at all points of production, the project was completed, and was successfully sold to an external client. This is the first key lesson from this project. It may be that a key part of the scaffolding for a project such as this is having a staff member working as a producer – taking responsibility for driving a project, and providing a structure within which students can work. This brings us back to the question of how to teach students about responsibility, which was raised by all three models. How do we teach students about how the television and mainstream film industries work – and particularly, about the role of producers taking responsibility for producing a product that will

meet the needs of external clients (audiences, networks, distributors). How does one teach the ability to take responsibility for completing a project? How does one model it – when, in the act of taking responsibility for the product, this is by definition then taken away from the students? If the role of the producer is to be the one person who says, 'I personally guarantee that this will be completed', how can we model that? At the moment, we still haven't found a final answer to that question. But we can give some definitive answers about how not to do it.

The second key lesson is related to this. If a key part of the scaffolding for such projects involves a staff member working as a producer on a project, this takes as much time as it would for a producer in the television industry. It's a lot of work. The role of the producer basically means taking responsibility for ensuring that a project is completed. Although the production is delegated, the producer takes responsibility for keeping an eye on every element, and, if there are problems or if anything is falling behind schedule, for finding ways to fix that up. Often this can mean completing work themselves. When a real client is involved, it is not acceptable for a project to end up unfinished and for the staff member simply to valorize 'the learning experience'. This is not what the client needs. And so the staff member ends up taking on a full producer role in the project.

The third key lesson was learned after the telecommunications company had initially agreed to buy the product. Their content manager then left the network. His replacement then 'wiped the slate clean' – that is, decided not to proceed with all of the projects that her predecessor had started. This left us without a real-world client for the final part of the project (we later found another distributor). The lesson here is simply one of the provisionality of real-world work. Universities need to know that classes will run every semester. They guarantee this to their students. By contrast, the world of television (and mainstream entertainment film) production is the world of 'Development Hell'. Nothing is certain until the project is finally broadcast. Even when a deal is done, staff and situations can change. There is not much that can be taken from this lesson in terms of changing our teaching practice – other than telling students that this is something they will learn to expect in the real world of television and film production. We may simply have to accept that this is a point of friction between university and real-world practice.

The fourth key lesson was that some of the students involved in this project, although it was the only one completed out of three models, told me that they were unhappy with it, and didn't enjoy the process. Their comments revolved around the basic issue that they did not have enough freedom in this project to do what they wanted. They resented having a real world director working on the project, and having a staff member working as the producer. They wished they could have directed and produced it themselves, as they felt this would have given them more creative control over their artistic expression. This is a difficult bind for us. Our experience with the other models suggests that students need support and modeling in order to learn to work successfully in high level roles such as directing and producing. But when that support and modeling was provided, several students were unhappy at the lack of control this meant for the project.

Conclusion

As Herrington and Herrington (2006) have noted, there currently exists little information on the operationalization of authentic learning in specific disciplines, and their landmark collection does not include a chapter on authentic learning of Television. In such a context, this paper has a modest aim – to provide a series of case studies about attempts to introduce such learning in the Television degree at QUT which may be of use to other academics embarking on such projects. Most of Herrington and Oliver's nine key elements of authentic learning could be operationalized with few difficulties for these projects. It was the seventh aspect – the need for scaffolding, and what levels of support and guidance were appropriate – that became the real sticking point. What forms and extent of scaffolding are necessary in order to operationalize a real world project as an authentic learning experience?

This was because one of the key elements that must be taught to students interested in working as television producers is to take responsibility for the organization and completion of a project. How much structure can experts and educators provide before this element of the project is sacrificed? The three case studies in this paper describe a variety of approaches to this issue. Hopefully our experiences in trying to negotiate between reality and authenticity will save other teachers from having to start from scratch in doing this.

Synthesizing the data gathered from our three experiments produces three key suggestions for teachers attempting to provide authentic learning using real world projects. These can be generalized to other disciplines which want to introduce authentic learning in the Creative Industries.

The first key lesson is that if we are serious about providing scaffolding, then we have to produce less product. In the traditional model of artistic expression for film and television teaching, it would not be unusual for a class of twenty students to produce six short films over the course of year – perhaps over an hour of material. As noted above, to produce a mainstream film or television program can involve hundreds of industry professionals (who are not involved in learning processes) working for several months. If we want to allow for authentic learning about the production of mainstream television and film, we need to produce smaller amounts of material. This means that as well as the students striving to produce the best material they can within the given constraints (which will always be a central concern), they can also be provided with scaffolding from staff as they experience the multiple other issues involved in mainstream production - the interaction with clients, the need to take feedback on every stage from multiple stakeholders, and for the product to be weighed against the needs of the target audience.

On this same point, individual students should not have individual responsibility for projects, but benefit from the support of working as teams on roles – allowing them to discuss ideas and not feel that they are overwhelmed by the project.

The second key lesson is that there are several structural elements that must be scaffolded before students arrive on the project. These are basically to do with relationships between stakeholders over whom students do not have any power. The key points that must be prepared in advance of students becoming involved in negotiations are:

- An authorized officer from each stakeholder institution must be appointed (the university, the client, the broadcaster if that is not the client), and their rights and responsibilities clearly articulated.

- The project brief must already be present at least in a basic form.

- Final deadlines must already be locked down.

- Availability of university technical resources, and procedures for accessing them must be established.

- Procedures for conflict resolution must be in place.

The third key lesson is that – although we have not yet perfected this element – it seems clear that a staff member must take on some level of producing responsibility on the project. This provides the basic scaffolding of the project within which the students can then work. Students still need modeling to show them how to run a production project – which, even on a small university project such as this, is necessarily a complex and involved project, with many people and many stages. We cannot expect students simply to know instinctively what stages are involved in a television project, or how long they take. The key issue we still need to work out is how the staff member and the students can both feel a sense of ownership and responsibility over the project. It

may be that the real world model of a number of producers in different roles (Executive Producer, Series Producer, Line Producer) may in future provide useful models for this spreading of responsibility.

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