Transnational workshop:
Interactive Audience Experiences
Evaluation

EMERGING MEDIA EXPLORATION

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Interactive Audience Experiences
Evaluation

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Introduction

In the international workshop "Interactive Audience Experiences", international students with different backgrounds formed 6 teams. Each team consisted of 4 or 5 members and was tasked with designing and prototyping an interactive and participative TV format (e.g., show, event, serial fiction). The concepts were prepared in a series of facilitated online-sessions starting one month before the workshop. With the help of an experienced mentor, the teams developed and visualised engaging concepts to enhance audience interaction with television. During the following one-week workshop in Tampere, Finland, the students produced prototypes and tested their concepts in an intense design-sprint.

In addition to participating teachers, the workshop was supported by TV innovation professionals from YLE, Finland, and RBB, Germany with feedback on concept and design, and withtechnical support both online and on-site.

The groups included students who had already participated in the spring course and who were able to further develop their ideas in this course. New participants chose a team to join according to their interests.

To evaluate the course the participants were asked to write Post-it feedback notes directly after the final presentation. All the notes were clustered into main categories, summarised and analysed to provide a structured overview for the development of the next course.

Student Post-it Feedback

Overall course concept

One of the most frequent feedback comments was on the general concept of an international and interdisciplinary group workshop itself. The students found working in mixed teams not only enjoyable, but also beneficial.
In their own words: "The different expertise and backgrounds helped us to think more outside the box and made us try something new" and "Good way to connect internationally and widen your horizon. Networking is always great! "

- **Group forming:** The predefined group division was also seen positively. But there was also a note suggesting that the groups should be better balanced. Not rated but also noted was the fact that a few students from the UK had to join already-formed teams.

- **Preparatory online course:** There were only a few notes on the preparatory online course. One suggested that moderation and explanation of methods could have been better and the second suggested offering more frequent sessions where all teams came together for advice. The meeting times should be suitable for all international students involved.

- **Methods:** For most of the participants, the concept of a design sprint worked very well and was fun to do, but some would have liked this method to be better explained. They noted that in general focus should be more on the methodology and not on the end result. This also applied to techniques used within a design sprint, such as e.g., concept pitching. Participants also wanted more input on creative techniques during the preparatory online course.

- **Industry expertise:** The students really appreciated the input from industry experts. The seminar day at the beginning of the course, where various representatives from companies spoke about the future of television, was mentioned positively several times. Students wanted more possibilities to talk, to get feedback and also the possibility to sell their ideas. The onsite presence of a member from YLE was also very appreciated.

- **Mentor concept:** The concept and the mentors themselves were very well received. Participants liked the availability and the guidance of the mentors. "Tutors were there when you needed them, and really good guidance." It was also noted positively that the mentoring team had different backgrounds. Two individual participants were not so satisfied with their mentors. For one, the mentoring was too passive, for the other the view was too dogmatic.

Implementation of the workshop elements

- **Fixed scheduled elements:** Most of the comments refer to the daily morning meetings. They were partly considered to take place too often or were even seen as useless. Participants would have liked more informative and effective meetings in the morning and generally more time to actually work on the project.

- **Schedule and Timing:** Opinions differed on the timetable for the intensive workshop week. It was declared that the workshop had "good timing for everything." But there are several comments on the timing scheduling of individual components of the course - some students thought that the rigid

timing for the pitches was too strict. Each group should be given at least a little more time to overcome potential technical difficulties.
Even though the schedule of the intensive week was explained at the kick-off, some participants wanted timetables showing the daily plans. Some of them seemed to be surprised by the planned user tests. And some would have preferred the final user tests to have taken place the day before the final pitches.

- **Sociability:** Starting with the presentations on the first day of the workshop week was felt to be demanding. "There should be time to get to know each other in real life before the pitch on the first day within the teams. Participants wanted common leisure activities like cultural trips, and small groups of students arranged such activities on their own initiative. Shared lunch breaks for all groups were another concrete suggestion.

- **Environment workshop week:** The final presentation/pitches would have been better in a different room, such as a theatre or cinema. Some of the groups also wanted a more "communicative" room for the morning sessions.

Results

All groups were able to present concrete innovative conceptual designs for interactive TV formats, thus achieving the course objective. One group focused more on understanding audience personalisation in general.

Group 1
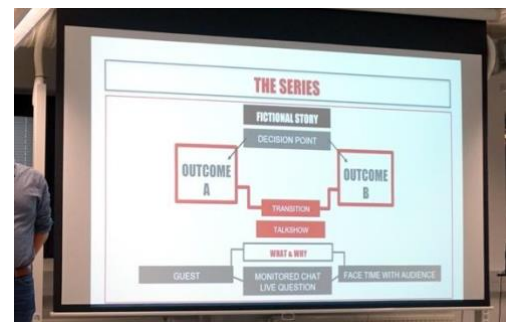
Project name: Deadline
Fictional stories, in which the user must choose between two serious options for action, leading to a result which is later discussed with guests, audience and moderators. This project was based on an idea created during the spring course.
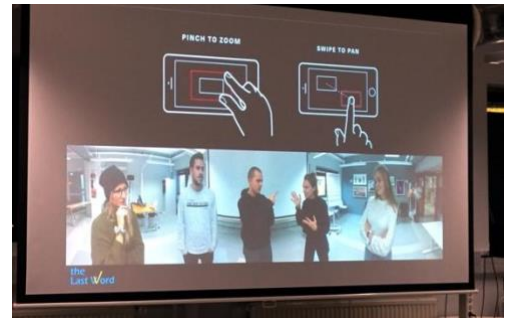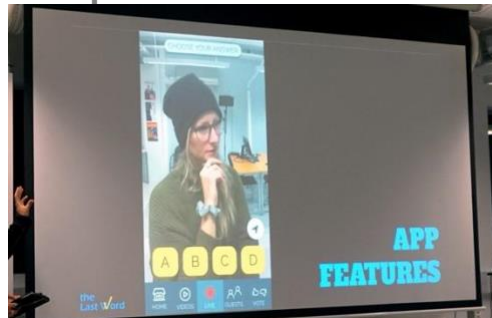
Group 2

Project name: YEU Play
An interactive game show that aims to educate high school students about the cultures of various members of the European Union in a school-community setting.
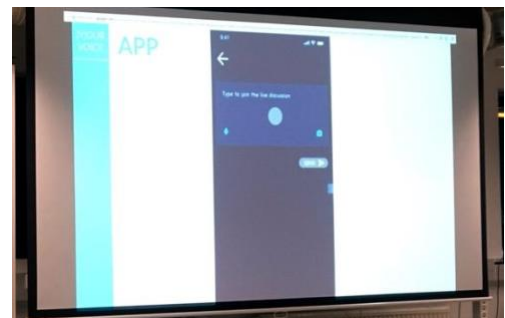
Group 3

Project name: the Last Word
A TV format in which the audience can share their opinion via a multiple choice app.

Group 4

Project name: (Y)our voice
A social political talk show, in which the 14-17 year old audience can make their opinions known via an app.

Group 5

Project name: You AR
A two-part AR experience, consisting of a narrative short film and an AR adventure.

Group 6

Project name: Screen^2
Understanding audience personalisation and its underlying development.

Insights and Conclusions

- The mentoring approach works very well. However, as participants also value feedback from different perspectives, it makes sense for teams to be supervised by more than one mentor and for events to be organised in which all teams, mentors, teachers and industry partners participate to provide feedback and support.
- The students clearly value highly the expertise of interview partners and would like to work very closely with them to gather further insights.
  In conclusion, industry partners should be integrated in the course concept as far as possible. For this, individual interviews with the teams and industry members could be set up.
- The schedule of a one-week design sprint is intense, but none of the component parts can be dropped.
  There will always be parts of the sprint that individual students feel are too short or too long. The main insight here is that the schedule must be clearly understandable for all involved.
  To this end, the plan should be visible at all times and mentors should explain upcoming steps.
- It became clear that all information conveyed during the kick-off, such as e.g., the schedule for the week, is not absorbed or remembered in its entirety. This

can probably be attributed to the amount of information and the unfamiliar situation. All facts and information announced in the kick-off should therefore not be taken by mentors as known by the students. This information must be repeated during the course of the workshop.

- It is not sufficient that methods are briefly explained and applied under guidance. Students want to understand these methods so that they can apply them in the future. Accordingly, materials are needed that explain methods and make them more comprehensible.