



Artistic Education System
for Social Inclusion of young
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
and Transgender adults



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

2nd CASE STUDY (Workshop Hyperion College 2015)

Country	NETHERLANDS
Partner Organisation	GALE
Type of the EVENT	
Title	Workshop Hyperion College
Date/Period	13 th March 2014
Venue	Hyperion College, Amsterdam
Workshop program	<p>10:00 Welcome and purpose meeting today by Peter / Ad 10.05 Introduction Franka Stas, film teacher secondary school, teaching materials developer film at "Caged" (Dutch "Uitgesproken" literally "Spoken Out") 10.10 Exhibit "Caged" and "Ruben" 10:35 Short first reactions participants; 10.40 Franka talks about how she has worked with the film with her students; 10:45 Introduction Lazlo and Dylan Tonk, makers of the film. What dilemmas did they encounter when making the film, taking into account the objective of the film to combat homophobia and to actively engage straight boys? 11.00 In five groups led by Franka, Dylan, Lazlo, Peter and Ad discuss dilemmas / statements: dilemmas related to the movies "Caged" and "Ruben" 11.30 Plenary feedback group</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS & ADULTS</p> <p>12:45 Lesson by Dutch teacher Iris Driessen (see: www.rozeinbeeld.nl under "Klassen", under "CKV" (ACM) and "Uitgesproken". Welcome to the guests and introduction of the lesson: sharing knowledge about using film in education and homophobia. Yesterday the Pink Film Days started in Amsterdam for the 18th time in cinema Het Ketelhuis, Westergasterrein. There will be 110 main films screened, and in addition a</p>

	<p>series of documentaries and short films from around the world.</p> <p>12:50 ASSIGNMENT 1: Mindmapping. Together, we will create a mind map on the board of our thoughts and reflections.</p> <p>13:00 ASSIGNMENT 2: Watching a short movie. We are going to watch a short film that was at the festival last year: the Dutch film "Caged" by Lazlo and Dylan Tonk, two young directors from Utrecht.</p> <p>13:05 Screening "Caged"</p> <p>13":20 First responses; what did you think of the movie? The story? How it was played? The casting?</p> <p>13:25 Compare this with the associations on the mind map. Does this film fit the associations we put on the mind map? Are there similarities and differences? Which ones?</p> <p>13:30 ASSIGNMENT 3: Small groups. We developed lesson materials with the film, we will do one assignment of that lesson. We split up in small groups of 4 or 5 students and each group be joined by one or two foreign guests. They will participate in the assignment.</p> <p>13:35 Each group gets a number of statements on folded papers. Students open a note by taking turns. They read the statement aloud and tell what they think about that statement. After that 1 or 2 others respond. After a short while the next student opens the next note. There are no wrong answers, your response is your personal opinion and the purpose is to exchange opinions. Look and listen well to the opinion of the foreign guests and ask yourself why they have these opinions.</p> <p>13:45 ASSIGNMENT 4: Closing discussion. Come back to the classroom. Each group gives one striking statements that was made in the group.</p>
<p>Training and Learning approach (<i>to describe</i>)</p>	<p>Screening of films, plenary and small groups discussion</p>
<p>Main Target groups/participants involved (number; young/adult). <i>The participants' age can be learnt from the "data analysis evaluation form" directly.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 students involved, 13 adults - Totally: 38 participants
<p>Commenting on what you think worked or did not work so well; how you might learn from this and adapt next time; the quality of the discussions; the engagement levels of the participants; if the ACM content used was effective, etc.</p>	<p>The following aspects of the two events organised by the ARES project at Hyperion College were most appreciated by participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of different types of movies that contrast with each other. ▪ Discussion between students and adults. The enthusiasm of young people is very empowering for adults, the expertise of adults in interesting for students.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation in viewing film, plenary discussion and small group work. ▪ Getting to know the teaching method of Franka Stas, which deals with homophobia by focusing on making a film rather than on discussing homophobia as such. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement this workshop and the technology of Franka Stas more widely in schools. • Review if these Dutch workshop technologies can be used in other countries.
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Valentina Vezelli: Quantitative Analysis

This paragraph is a chapter from the internship report of Valentina Vezelli, who devoted part of her internship on this case study.

The first extract of the study that will be analyzed is the quantitative part of the research, which consists of a survey of 12 questions related to the experience at the ARES conference. As stated in the previous chapter, all the participants filled in the questionnaire right after the project was concluded. The questions were statements with which the participants had to agree or disagree (on a scale from 0 – strongly disagree- to 4 – strongly agree). In this section I will analyze the students’ answers (24 students in total, 12 of which declared to be male and 12 female)¹.

The results show a very positive evaluation of the activity. In fact, 100% of the students considered the project “excellent”, with a knowledgeable trainer/speaker (92% agree, 8% neutral, 0% disagree), a good debate and comments (96% agree, 4% neutral, 0% disagree), pertinent and useful materials (92% agree, 8%, 0% disagree) and easy to follow (92% agree, 4% neutral and 4% disagree, probably because of the fact that the activity occurred in English and some students had difficulty with the language). Moreover, the majority of the students declared that the contents of the activity met their expectations (88% agree, 8% neutral and 4%

¹ The complete statistical analysis can be found in the Appendix (insert letter of app.).

disagree), while only less than a quarter of them (21%) found those contents new (29% neutral and 50% already knew the content), and 57% of them stated that they will be able to apply the knowledge learned (43% neutral, and 0% disagree). The comments and recommendations left at the end of the questionnaire showed that the activity was highly appreciated (“a very good class”, “interesting project”, “Great activity, I think it can help people”²) and 37% of the students suggested to dedicate more time to the activity (which lasted about one hour and a half).

The analysis of the quantitative data suggests a positive attitude towards the topic dealt in class from the students. One third of the class was probably not aware of homophobic bullying or sexual diversity and although half of the students had already heard about the argument, they all showed interest and appreciated the whole project. Nevertheless, only a bit more than the half of them declared to be able to apply the knowledge learned and the rest of them were neutral. This might show a didactic attitude towards the topic, which means that some students interpreted this knowledge as something that is produced at school for educational purposes and that, usually stays at school - this can also be confirmed by the fact that 43% of the students were neutral to the question, hence, not interested in applying the knowledge outside the educational institution. For example, during the introductory discussion, the teacher asked the students what does LGBT mean and a girl quickly answered correctly, showing interest and enthusiasm, and she actively participated to the whole discussion. However, during the first bullying scene in the film (“Faggots are not welcome here” Tonk, D. and L., *Uitgesproken*, 2013), the same girl and a few more students were sniggering. This incongruous behavior might imply the girl’s desire to be a good student that always gives the right answer in order to demonstrate that she possesses the right knowledge, a knowledge that, apparently, disappears when the girl faces an act of bullying, even if it is fictional. One might argue that a film is not reality and that I do not know how this student would react to a real act of bullying, which is true. Nevertheless, as I will illustrate in the next section, all the students found the movie relatable, credible and applicable to reality.

1.2 Qualitative Components: ‘Uitgesproken’, Reactions, Discussion and Interviews

² Translated by the author. The original comments can be found in the Appendix (see above).

As stated in the previous chapter, right before the film screening, the teacher showed the students a poster of Roze Filmdagen (Pink film days in English), the LGBT film festival that would have taken place in Amsterdam a few days later and asked them to state what the poster made them think of. There was a variety of answers, most of which quite stereotypical and homonormative³, like “Gay Pride/Parade”, “Glitter, glamour, girly”, “Gerard Joling” (a Dutch openly gay and flamboyant celebrity) and “Rainbow flag”, but also challenging and critical (“Controversial”, “Understanding what is different” “Discussion” and “Acceptance”). For example, a student made a comment about the connection between homosexuality and the color pink: “I think they should have put LGBT instead of pink, because pink is not related to (homo)sexuality”. Finally, there were open-minded responses, such as “Making the right choice”, “Standing up for somebody else” and, related to the question “Who do you think will go to the festival?”, a boy answered: “I think also close-minded people should go to the festival, because they can go there, see something they have never seen before and change their minds!”(student, 2015, participant observation).

This suggests that the young audience is clearly influenced by the stereotypical representations of LGBT people in the media, that mainly depict homosexual men as feminine men obsessed with fashion and glitter. However, as it is possible to deduce from the following comments, this influence does not imply a resistance to the acceptance of sexual diversity. On the contrary, due to the introduction of gay main characters in popular TV shows like “Glee” (2009)⁴, some students showed undeniable support for LGBT people.

This support appeared in the course of the film screening, principally during the scenes that concerned the gay couple. Specifically, two female students were making negative comments about Bas, the bully, and were endorsing the romantic relationship between Niels and Tim. Furthermore, during the intense scene where David sees Niels kissing Tim and confronts him, one of the girls had the same reaction Niels had:

³Homonormativity is the assimilation of heteronormative ideals and constructs into homosexual culture and individual identity. It refers to politics that do not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions such as monogamy, procreation and binary gender roles. The term has often been studied in Transgender Studies (especially in Susan Stryker’s *Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity*, 2008).

⁴This was stated by a female student in an informal interview after the film screening.

David: “I thought we were friends.”

Niels: “So did I.”(ibid.)

The fact that the girl said “So did I” as well, suggests her identification with Niels’ struggle in terms of acceptance within friendship. Self-identification and relatability of the story and the characters are the key point of the film. In fact, one of the very first comments during the discussion was “I really enjoyed the movie because it is about friendship and I could relate to it”, which implies the need of the young audience to find a role model to follow and a story that can speak also about themselves. This is why both the directors decided to shift the perspective of the protagonist on a straight character and opted in favor of a story about “being bullied and excluded” (Tonk, D., 2015, personal interview). A further need of self-identification from the students arose when Dylan Tonk, one of the directors, took the lead in the conversation and answered the students’ questions. After stating that both he and his brother are gay, a girl asked whether or not they are religious because she wanted to know what was the relationship between their faith and their sexuality. In another occasion, I had the chance to ask the girl the reason of the question and her answer was: “I am very religious, and I asked that question because I wanted to know what to do when my religion says something against who I am or something I do not agree with” (student, 2015, personal interview).

Moreover, the discussion between Dylan Tonk and the students was filled with questions related to the director’s experience with his sexuality within a social context. After Tonk stated that he is homosexual and that *Uitgesproken* was the movie he would have wanted to watch when he was in high school, the young audience asked very personal questions, such as “Is your twin brother gay as well?”, “Have you been bullied?” and “How did your parents react when you told them?”. This curiosity insinuates that the students want a testimony of homosexuality from a homosexual person, in order to completely understand the issues these people are dealing with and to receive the right information:

“People need to stop treating us like children. They think that, by avoiding certain kinds of topics, they are protecting us, but they are not. It is better to face these uncomfortable conversations because it is better for us to know things from an expert rather than rely on what we see on TV or go on the internet and read the wrong information” (student, 2015, personal interview).

As stated in the previous chapter, after the class discussion, the team divided the students into small groups (composed by four students and one mediator, for instance a teacher or one of the partners that took part in the project) in order to discuss biased and stereotypical statement related to the topic of the movie and the conference. The exercise was quite simple: we had to read a statement and declare why we did or did not agree with it. During this activity, I was the mediator of one group of two boys and two girls. The first statement we discussed was “Homosexuality is a Western invention” and all the participants did not agree with it. One of the boys said “[i]t is not a Western invention because there are gay people in India, in Japan and everywhere” (student, 2015, personal interview) and the other students stated that homosexuality is not an invention at all because a sexual orientation cannot be invented. The second statement, “Lesbianism is more accepted than male homosexuality”, was unanimously considered true and one of the boys provided the following example: “Yes, I agree with it, because a lot of boys do not like to see two guys kissing, but when they see two girls kissing they always want to watch” (ibid.). The third and fourth statement, on the other hand, generated nuanced opinions:

“[statement: Showing off homosexuality is promoting it] Well, yes. I mean, sometimes it is not showing off, it is like a trend. Maybe they talk about it because they want to raise awareness. But I think that if you talk too much about anything, people can get tired of it” (ibid.)

“[statement: Stereotypes about homosexuality ruin homosexuality itself] I do not think so. If you fit into a stereotype it is ok, if you do not, it is ok. I understand that people prefer not to stick to the stereotype and confirm it, because it is easier to be normal, since you can be more accepted” (ibid.)

What emerges from these comments is an openness towards sexual diversity. However, this openness is associated with a process of normalization. As noted during the research, there is never a deconstructing approach on gender roles and heteronormativity, rather, there is tendency to emphasize the common features

between gay and straight people. Another interesting point that can be found in the latter examples, is the double role of stereotypes. On the one hand, a stereotype can function as an example to prove the truth about a general statement and is, therefore accepted as a fact (for instance, men like to watch two lesbians kissing and are disgusted by gay men). On the other hand, the students are aware of the fact that stereotypes must not be taken seriously because they are too general and often do not speak the truth. This process of both rejection and acceptance of stereotypes will be further discussed in the following chapter (4).

A further point that has to be analyzed is the lack of negative comments or, to put it in better words, the political correctness of the students. For the entire course of the activity, all the comments and the questions made by the students showed curiosity, interest and positivity. This might also apply to the type of school the activity took place in. In fact, in a personal interview, the directors of the movie mentioned that students of VWO schools (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs, literally, 'preparatory scholarly education'), high schools with the highest level of education, that usually prepare the students to university, are the most politically correct during the activities that concern sexual diversity, whether the VMBO students ('preparatory middle-level applied education, the lowest level in Dutch high schools), usually come from a lower social class, have a wider cultural and religious variety, and tend to offer resistance to the argument (Tonk, D. and L., 2015, personal interview).

The political correctness of the Hyperion Lyceum (a VWO school) can be described with the Dutch term *schijntolerantie*, which means seeming tolerance (Dewaele et al., 2006, Keuzenkamp, 2011). Seeming tolerance finds its origin in heteronormativity and describes the attitude of most heterosexual people (this study has been elaborated in Belgium and in the Netherlands, respectively in 2006 and 2011) towards homosexual. These studies have shown that both the Dutch and Belgian public thinks that LGBT people may live their lives the way they want to live it, as long as they comply with the set of rules developed by the heterosexual society. I do argue that seeming tolerance is consequent effect of the process of normalization that happens in Dutch schools and it is the same factor that prevents the students from applying the knowledge outside the classroom, or that, alternatively, makes the students indifferent to the practical application of the notions learned at school. Seeming tolerance makes people state 'socially desirable thoughts' in order to appear tolerant on the surface, but it does not make people accepting and open-minded, especially on a personal level. This process was clearly visible at the conference with the students of the Hyperion Lyceum, and, as I

noted, the teacher really cared about keeping this tolerant atmosphere. For example, during the discussion after the film screening, the group of students was debating about social distance towards minority groups and most of the students were stating positive and inclusive thoughts. There was, however, a student with a bothered expression on his face that clearly wanted to express an unpopular opinion, but the teacher did not allow him to speak. It is of course difficult to determine whether the teacher ignored him or on purpose or not, but I could definitely see that the teacher had noticed him with a raised hand and an annoyed expression on his face for several minutes and uncomfortably let somebody else speak⁵.

The final point that has to be taken into account in the discussion that will follow this chapter concerns the age of the audience. In the formal interview with Dylan and Lazlo Tonk, stated that the movie mainly affects a public made of 12-13 years old people. Students of this age have probably had less possibilities to discuss or encounter sexual diversity in comparison with older students which, according to directors, have often found the ending predictable.

⁵ As written in the field notes: “A boy clearly wants to say an unpopular opinion (he is definitely bothered and annoyed), and the teacher is not letting him speak (Ignored him? Avoided him on purpose? Why? Lack of confrontation).”