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The relationship between entertainment producers and higher education providers

Abstract

Cameron, Verhoeven and Court have noted that many screen producers do not see their tertiary education as being beneficial to their careers. We hypothesise that Universities have traditionally not trained students in producing skills because of the division of labour between Faculties of Art and Faculties of Business; and because their focus on art rather than entertainment has downplayed the importance of producing. This article presents a SOTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) whole-of-program evaluation of a new cross-Faculty Bachelor of Entertainment Industries at QUT, devoted to providing students with graduate attributes for producing including creative skills (understanding story, the aesthetics of entertainment, etc), business skills (business models, finance, marketing, etc) and legal skills (contracts, copyright, etc). Stakeholder evaluations suggest that entertainment producers are highly supportive of this new course.

Introduction

In a report on their survey of screen producers in Australia, Cameron, Verhoeven and Court (2010) note that: ‘Although many producers are highly educated (particularly in the humanities and creative arts), they don’t necessarily see that education as being of direct benefit to their career as a producer’ (97). For tertiary Film and Television educators this finding is disappointing, and presents the challenge of thinking about how higher education might better support

entertainment producers, and the creative industries in Australia.

This article sits in the genre of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) research and presents a whole-of-program evaluation (see for example Housego and Parker 2009) of a recent innovation at Queensland University of Technology – the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries. A whole-of-program approach to evaluating tertiary curricula is important for providing an integrated overview of how the elements of a curriculum fit together, and how overall it delivers desired graduate attributes. In this article we introduce the degree and discuss its role in training Australian producers, and thus, hopefully, in developing the entertainment industries in Australia. We discuss the graduate attributes identified as being key for training entertainment producers; and we present an evaluation by industry producers of the success of the whole-of-program design of the degree in providing students with those attributes. We then present a discussion of the impediments to such program design in Australian Universities.

Graduate attributes for producers

What skills do producers need? We know that:

> Aims, objectives and outcomes should always be central, as the starting point for designing and understanding the design of learning… It is vital first of all to determine precisely and fully what the purposes of the proposed learning are, and to keep these in mind consistently throughout the whole process of planning and delivery (George 2009, 161)

The question of the skills and knowledge required by entertainment producers was the starting point for the development of the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries at Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

In 2009, when this process began, the University already offered a BFA (Television Producing). This had been developed in response to a lack in our existing Film and Television offerings. We offered strong training for students who wanted to be camera operators or editors, and supported those who were keen to be directors – or that odd title 'filmmakers'. But we offered little to aspiring producers. When the Television Producing degree was established we realized that a similar lack existed in most of the areas of our Creative Industries Faculty – across not only Film and Television, but also Dance, Drama, Music, Creative Writing and Literary Studies, all of which are sectors which require producers. The Bachelor of Entertainment Industries – initially developed by Dr Christy Collis and Professor Alan McKee – was created to address this industry need.

We know from the work of Cameron, Verhoeven and Court that Australian Universities have not traditionally focused on producing skills. Their research found that while many producers have tertiary degrees in 'the humanities and creative arts' (2010, 97), they 'downplay the direct relevance of their existing qualification' (98). Cameron, Verhoeven and Court note the 'emphasis placed by producers on direct industry experience as their principal method of attaining knowledge and experiences', rather than their tertiary degrees (98), and that the producers they surveyed had 'misgivings about the relevance of their earlier educational experiences' (98).

Why have producers found Australian Universities to offer so little practical training in their area?

We would like to start by dismissing two arguments that might occur to readers.

One possibility for the lack of producer-training at Australian universities might be that there simply isn't the student demand for it. Could it be that front of camera and technical roles are simply more attractive to an undergraduate population and that young people entering tertiary study are not interested in becoming producers?

In fact we know that this isn't the case – the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries was originally meant to take thirty-four students into its first cohort. In the end, because of massive demand, we took eighty-six – and still had the highest entry score in the Creative Industries Faculty.

Another possible explanation for the traditional lack of producer training at Australian universities might be that perhaps it simply isn't possible to teach a student how to be a producer. Could it be that the skills the job involves can only be learned through practice? Undergraduate university degrees in Australia typically target school leavers, while successful producers commonly demonstrate a range of personal qualities – such as authority and strong networks – which are associated with maturity and experience. Could it be that it isn't possible to teach an eighteen year old to be a producer?

On this point we would note that, although the most powerful entertainment producers are older and more experienced, there also exist entry-level jobs in the producing sector – researchers, assistant producers, runners and so on. It

should be possible to provide students with at least some of the appropriate skills to enter this pathway.

Having dealt with these two arguments, we would like to demonstrate that it is indeed possible to design a University curriculum that teaches the skills needed by screen producers.

When we began to design the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries there existed no consensus about what should be taught in a producing degree, so we began by generating a list of the skills required by producers, as is required in curriculum design (George 2009). We are starting to see books devoted to teaching students how to be screen producers (see for example Collie 2007; Kellison 2006), and these provided a valuable starting point for identifying the skills needed by producers. Collie suggests that:

> producers need to have good creative instincts and to be able to detect where the heart of the story is. They need to be resourceful and be able to think laterally, knowing what the production process is about (and also what they don't know and who can fill the gap until they do) and what … audiences are about. They need the interpersonal skills to be able to negotiate with people and to resolve conflicts as they arise or threaten to arise. Producers need to be dogged, thick-skinned and persuasive (Collie 2007, 159)

For Kellison, 'a good producer': 'Is a problem solver … is the master of multi-tasking … is a middle man [sic] … wants to know everything … [and] enjoys the process' (Kellison 2006, 5). As well as drawing on this existing literature we also undertook an extensive process of consultation with entertainment producers to

find out what skills they thought were important and what they thought should be taught in a University course aiming to support aspiring producers. As the first step, two focus groups of senior entertainment producers across a number of sectors were convened. The first included Cherrie Bottger (Network Head of Children's Television, Network Ten), Christophe Broadway (Entertainment Manager, Warner Village Theme Parks), Ian Kenny (Executive Producer, Film Headquarters), Simon Gallagher (CEO, Essgee Entertainment) John Kotzas (Director, Queensland Performing Arts Centre), Tony Gould (Artistic Director, Queensland Performing Arts Centre) Athol Young (Project Manager, Brisbane City Council), Jeremey Wellard (Strategic Project Officer, Creative City Initiative, Brisbane City Council) and David Fishel (Director, Positive Solutions). The second included John Stainton (CEO, John Stainton Productions), Darren Clarke (Producer, Deep Blue Orchestra), Sean Ryan (General Manager, Nova 106.9), Everett True (Editor, Collapse Board), Christophe Broadway, Andrew Fee (Creative Producer, Raw Dance Company), Sean Sennett (Publisher, Time Off Media), and Adrian Mezzina (Director, The Arcade Creative).

Drawing on the insights of these industry focus groups we developed a list of thirty-seven generic, cross-sectoral producing skills to be taught and personal characteristics to be developed in the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries[1]:

Nature of entertainment

1. Understanding of story.
2. Understanding the importance of audience to entertainment.

3. Understanding entertainment creativity (working within a brief is not the opposite of creativity – can be enabling. Getting excited about a project that you are given).
4. Understanding characteristics of successful entertainment.
5. How to spot a good property – assessing a pitch – is it a good idea?
6. Sector specific knowledge.

Personal characteristics

7. Problem solving skills.
8. Thick-skinned (determination).
9. Ability not to panic.
10. Good attitude – treat people well.
11. Understand collaborative creativity (don't have to have all ideas yourself, different kind of creativity bouncing off people).
12. Ability to meet deadlines.
13. Being able to take responsibility.
14. Developing creativity.
15. How to give and take constructive criticism.

Communication skills

16. Written communication skills.
17. How to pitch.
18. How to write a proposal.
19. Phone conversations and cold calling.
20. Comprehension – understanding written information.
21. Working to a brief (how to read a brief to spot the important constraints).

Business skills

22. Knowledge about 'Entertainment Industries" as an industry sector (size of companies, nature of product, etc).
23. How to find out what your audience likes (research, focus groups, being part of the target audience, informal research - 'My daughter likes this').
24. Understand a range of business models.
25. Basic accountancy, budgeting.
26. Basic finance – where does money come from?
27. Basic marketing.
28. Transition to work – knowledge of career paths.

Management skills

29. How to put a creative team together (matching temperaments).
30. How to manage a creative team – leadership (understanding what makes people tick, working with that).
31. How to manage a creative team - conflict resolution.
32. Project management skills.
33. How to get things out of people – networking and relationships, people working for money; for friendship; because they love a project.

Legal skills

34. Understand contracts (including 'options') – how to do a deal memo, heads of agreement.
35. Understand legal obligations to contractors and suppliers.
36. Understand copyright – what you can use, what you can't use.
37. Basic understanding of IR.

This list was then used as the basis for a curriculum map that ensured that each of the skills would be taught and assessed over the three years of the degree (for more details see Collis, McKee and Hamley 2010).

Why have Universities not focused on producing?

From this basis we would argue that it is in fact possible to create a curriculum that addresses the needs of producers. The fact that the producers surveyed by Cameron, Verhoeven and Court feel that Australian Universities have not traditionally done so cannot be explained by saying that it simply isn't possible to teach producing skills. At least some skills can be taught, to help students be work-ready for at least entry-level positions on a producing pathway. Given that this is the case, why haven't Australian Universities been teaching producerly skills?

At this point it is worth noting the existence of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, with its Centre for Screen Business, and its Graduate Diplomas and Certificates in Producing and in Screen Business. AFTRS sits outside of the University sector and offers an alternative model of how entertainment producing might be taught.

We offer a number of hypotheses as to why Universities have not engaged in this kind of teaching – all of which bear further investigation. One possibility might be that the role requires a combination of creative and business skills, and so falls between Faculties. It may be that Arts Faculties have tended to be suspicious of commercial culture. Similarly, it may be that Business Faculties have tended towards the social sciences (particularly psychology) and therefore

have a natural tendency towards seeing their decisions and judgments as being based on hard evidence and metrics. This would result in a gap between the Faculties, into which would fall those jobs that require both commercial hardheadedness and creative thinking. Further, it may be that Business Faculties have tended not to focus on specific industries or sectors and so it is rare to find any business curricula anywhere in the world that focus on entertainment. Indeed it's worth noting that business is still a young discipline when compared to the study of humanities, sciences and the professions. Many business schools within Australian universities only emerged during the 1970s or 1980s, and so many older producers would never have had the chance to study in a Business school anyway. Consequently it may be that producers - those workers who have to combine creative thinking with pragmatic business skills - have fallen through the gaps. A producer is not just a businessperson. A producer is not just creative. A producer must be both at once – and more. A producer must be able to see how to produce an effective piece of culture working within budgetary, legal, time and other constraints.

What we can say with certainty is that to the extent that Universities *have* taught the producerly skills that we identified, these have traditionally been taught across a number of Faculties at Universities – Arts, Business and Law – and have not been integrated into a single course of study. It was for precisely this reason that the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries was developed by staff from the Creative Industries Faculty, the Faculty of Law, and the School of Business at QUT. The core units have input from all three Faculties. Each faculty has designed and teaches specific units within the degree – for example Entertainment Law, Entertainment Marketing and Media Writing.

But there is also a problem with the nature of Arts Faculties themselves when it comes to teaching producing. As we argue below the role of the producer in art has traditionally been less important than her/his role has been in entertainment – and Arts Faculties have traditionally shown little interest in teaching students how to make mainstream commercial entertainment. A market survey of competing courses done during the development process of the degree revealed not a single Bachelor of Entertainment or Masters of Entertainment at any Australian University (one Bachelor of Entertainment is taught at JMC, a private education provider in Brisbane).

This focus on Arts rather than Entertainment has implications for what is taught at Universities. It's common for University teaching to distinguish between 'theory' and 'practice'. In University teaching of film and television the kinds of 'theory' that have traditionally been taught have not tended to be those that producers might find useful – for example, how finance works, or the basics of project management, or how to understand audiences, their motivations and behaviours or the history and characteristics of successful entertainment – all of which could reasonably be described as 'theory'. Rather it may be that the 'theory' that is traditionally taught in Film and Television courses tends to be 'cultural theory' – philosophical writing about the value of culture, which leads to 'appreciation' of certain kinds of texts (art films, video installations, experimental work) in particular, and 'critical' approaches to (often amounting to condemnation of) commercial culture. Students graduating from such degrees would have a detailed understanding of an intellectual tradition based around criticism of film and television (with the focus on cinematic arts) emerging from and sustained by philosophies of art and culture.

Henry Jenkins defines theory as 'speculation … a set of propositions larger than the individual example' (quoted in McKee 2002, 312) and under this definition there exists a rich vein of 'theory' about the screen industries produced from within those industries themselves. Thomas McLaughlin has argued that: 'theory is not the elite activity that both its enemies and defenders claim it to be. It is an integral and crucial element in everyday culture' (McLaughlin 1996, 29). And John Caldwell has shown that '[f]ar from involving rote or merely intuitive work, many film/television workers … critically analyze and theorize their tasks in provocative and complex ways' (Caldwell 2008, 2). Indeed, one way of describing the role of the producer in the screen industries is as a member of that class of intellectual workers whose job is to understand how the film and television industry works and to think critically about its products and the processes by which they are created. But 'critics seldom acknowledge film/video workers are theorists' (Caldwell 2008, 5) and the feedback of the producers surveyed by Cameron, Verhoeven and Court suggest that this is not the 'theory' that is being taught in based Film and Television courses. We know that the model of the 'culture industry' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972 [1944], 120) - which emerged during the 1940s and continues to have purchase in academic writing (During 2007, 1) - does not recognize intellectual work in the production of television or popular film. In that model, 'the culture industry' itself is presented as the active agent that makes decisions and takes actions (Adorno 1975, 12). There is no place in such a model for the critical work of those who produce the content. This may explain why the 'theory' taught in traditional film studies tends to lead to appreciation of art films, international cinema, experimental films, or a small

pool of critically acclaimed Hollywood films that are old enough to have been reclaimed as art by philosophers (Hitchcock, Ford, Scorsese)[2].

On the other hand there is a 'practical' tradition of teaching Film and Television at Universities. But even here, according to the producers surveyed by Cameron, Verhoeven and Court, producing skills have not been taught. From their feedback it would seem that 'Practical' in these courses has not meant an understanding of funding models or of audience tastes – although these are eminently 'practical' skills in the film and television industries. It may be that 'practical' has been taken to be synonymous with 'technical' – teaching the students about camerawork, lighting, sound and editing. Where these degrees include a focus on media business, the results of Cameron, Verhoeven and Court's survey of producers suggests that the work of understanding audiences, or mastering distribution models has not been a key focus.

Whatever the reasons, Cameron, Verhoeven and Court's survey suggests that neither of these kinds of film and television courses covers many of the skills identified by producers as necessary. At this point in the article we want to step aside from the SOTL whole-of-program analysis in order to continue the discussion of why it might be that such a program has not previously been created as an Australian University.

Entertainment and producers

Why is this degree called the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries? Why not the Bachelor of Producing?

Art and entertainment function in many ways as distinct forms of culture –

although the binary is never a simple one. This is not to make any claims about the worth of any individual piece of culture. It is certainly possible to argue that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is art (Pateman 2006) or that opera is entertainment (Donohue 2010). But in institutional and discursive terms, art and entertainment function differently in Western culture in at least four identifiable ways – business models, consumption patterns, aesthetic systems and attitudes towards the audience.

Firstly, in terms of business models, Scheff and Kotler note that arts organisations tend to work very differently from producers of commercial culture:

> The sharp distinction between the 'nobility' of art and the 'vulgarity' of mere entertainment is due in part to the systems under which they operate. The performing arts are predominantly distributed by nonprofit organizations, managed by artistic professionals, governed by prosperous and influential trustees and supported in a large part by funders. Popular entertainment, on the other hand, is sponsored by profit-seeking enterpreneurs and distributed via the market (Scheff and Kotler 1996, 34)

From this basic distinction flow a whole series of differences between the business models of art and entertainment. Art tends to be self-funded or project based, relying on up-front government grant funding, sponsorship or philanthropy, for a series of discrete projects. Entertainment, by contrast, tends to be based on building a slate of income-producing projects that continue to generate revenue throughout their lifecycle and provide business continuity (Casali and Mazzarol 2011, 2). For producers, such differences are vitally

important.

Secondly, in terms of consumption practices, research demonstrates that it still remains the case that high art is consumed by small fractions of the population, and by those with high levels of formal education. Warde, Wright and Gayo-Gal surveyed 1564 British consumers. Rates for liking high art objects were low – the films of Mani Ratman scored 0.6%, *Einstein on the Beach* 3.3%. There is a significant gap between modern jazz (12.0%) and the next most popular form of culture surveyed, televised soccer (44.4%), and the works of Oasis (46.6%) and Frank Sinatra (64.7%) (Warde, Wright and Gayo-Cal 2007, 147). The researchers also found that there exists a group of what they call 'consecrated' tastes – forms of culture where university graduates are 'more than twice as likely as an unqualified [sic] respondent to state a positive preference' (Warde, Wright and Gayo-Cal 2007, 150). These include the films of Jane Campion, the work of Tracey Emin and 'modern literature'.

Thirdly, there exist different aesthetic systems for judging art and literature. Take these examples, pulled at random from recent newspaper reviews: 'the deficiencies of *Love Never Dies* as art are more than covered for by its value as sumptuous old-fashioned entertainment' (Blake 2012, 10); 'These stories … might not qualify as art, but they sell. Very, very well … Her books might not change lives or linger too long in the mind but they give several hours of pleasurable escape' (Morris 2012, 30); 'High literature it is not but … the characters are clear-cut, the pace is demanding and the ideas are bold' (Goldsworthy 2012, 34). The aesthetic system of entertainment finds value in products that are fast moving, vulgar, fun, spectacular, emotional, focused on

story and have happy endings (McKee 2012). This is somewhat different from aesthetic systems by which art is valued.

Fourthly, in their attitudes towards the audience, the systems of producing art and entertainment are quite different (Storey 2002) and we would like to spend some time on this distinction as it is vital for understanding the role of producers in the two systems. Art and entertainment as distinct cultural categories emerged in Western culture during the nineteenth century (Levine 1988). Before this time upper and lower class citizens shared common cultural resources. Shakespeare, for example, was presented as popular entertainment. This meant that Shakespeare was presented differently – in a more interactive manner, with audience rowdiness encouraged. The text was not sacred. The play would be altered so that popular soliloquies would be repeated upon audience demand. Popular songs would be inserted into the text. If the audience wanted an happy ending for *Romeo and Juliet* then the audience got it (Levine 1988, 43).

But over the course of the nineteenth century cultural elites worked explicitly to separate their cultural consumption from that of the masses. The binary of 'art' versus 'entertainment' was introduced. Shakespeare was taken from popular entertainment and turned into art – a process Levine describes as 'the sacralization of culture' (Levine 1988, 83). A key element of this process was changing the relationship between audiences and the text. In entertainment the audience was in charge – rowdy, demanding and in control. For art, a new form of audience response was developed – respect for the work of art.

> Nothing seems to have troubled the new arbiters of culture more than the nineteenth-century practice of spontaneous expressions of pleasure and

> disapproval in the form of cheers, yells, gesticulations, hisses, boos, stamping of feet, whistling, crying for encores, and applause … In 1895 George Gladden compared applause to the clashing together of spears, shields and battle axes by primitive savages (Levine 1988, 192)

In this new, sacralized model it was the artist who was in charge – not the audience. Whereas previously the makers of culture were trying to give the audiences what they wanted, in this new model – high culture – audiences would be given what was good for them. And if they did not enjoy it, then it was the audience who would have to change – not the kinds of culture that artists wanted to produce. This process of 'disciplining and training audiences' (Levine 1988, 184) was one of the key elements of creating 'art' as a category, working to:

> render audiences docile, willing to accept what the experts deemed appropriate rather than play a role themselves in determining either the repertory or the manner of presentation (Levine 1988, 189)

This overt form of social engineering was designed to bring order to lower class behavior by ensuring the masses conformed to accepted social etiquette and good manners at high-culture events. At this time in history increasing populations in major cities resulting from industrialization gave the masses not only increased leisure time at weekends, but a level of disposable income from working in factories. For many in the social elite this represented a real threat to their way of life – and indeed to the stability of Western civilization (Levine 1988, 173)

Popular entertainment listened to audiences and gave them what they wanted. Art provided the realm of expression of artists, which audiences had to be

trained to enjoy. The makers of art can proclaim that they have no interest in the audience for their work. As Jean-Luc Godard puts it: 'films are made for one or maybe two people' (quoted in Puttman and Watson 1998, 232). But successful entertainment producers have to work differently. Joss Whedon, the creator of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, is one example. He isn't one of:

> these kinds of pretentious people who … talk down to the audience. He doesn't do that. He treats the audience with respect. That's why he's so successful (Benson, quoted in McCabe 2010, 54)

And it is still the case that for art, if audiences don't like the product then it is the audience that must be changed, not the content – under the rubric of 'audience development' (Kawashima 2006).

Cameron, Verhoeven and Court quote the Producers Guild of America as saying that 'Without producers entertainment doesn't happen' (Cameron, Verhoeven and Court 2010, 90). But without producers, art can, and does, happen. An artist can produce a creative work simply for its own sake (a desire for self-expression) without any intention of ever making that work public hence there is no need for a producer to commercialise that content for exhibition in some form. It is for this reason that we suggested above that the role of the producer in art has traditionally been less important than her/his role in entertainment. It is not coincidental that television is called 'the producer's medium' (Newcomb and Alley 1983). The model of art we have inherited from the nineteenth century is centrally about the creative person expressing himself (sic): 'The artist's perspective transcends predetermined input from the audience. Art is pure expression, it is visionary' (Scheff and Kotler 1996, 38). By contrast commercial

survival in competitive entertainment markets is about giving audience members what they want – and thus relies on a mediator who brokers between the artist and the consumer. This is the producer. In entertainment, the producer is the key creative force driving its development. Arts managers have a slightly different role. While it is true that they have to understand finance and be able to run budgets and project manage, their primary job is not to make sure that the audience gets what it wants. If an artist is failing to do what they're told, an arts manager cannot fire and replace them – as a film producer can do with a difficult director, for example.

With this perspective in place, then, we would hypothesise that one reason the producers surveyed by Cameron, Verhoeven and Court may have found that their tertiary education failed to provide them with the skills to be a producer is that to the extent that Universities - both sandstone and technical - have traditionally trained students to be content makers, it has been as artists rather than workers in the entertainment industry. It has, we would propose, often been to work as 'filmmakers'- a term that is often synonymous with 'artist'. A 'filmmaker' can be someone who writes their own script (if a script is used), directs, and can film and edit their own work. This model is common among artists - creating work that expresses their inner vision. It is rare in the entertainment industry where practitioners tend more commonly to be named as directors or camera people, or writers (and the prevalence of the writer-director in the Australian film industry may in fact be a factor in Australian film's general lack of box office success).

Our producing degree, then, is the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries because

entertainment is the form of culture in which producers are the driving force that takes an idea and turns it into a product that an audience can enjoy. Arts managers are not the same thing as entertainment producers. Their role is the 'facilitation' of the work of the artist and 'the presentation of the artists' work to audiences' (Martin, quoted in Chong 2002, 8). By contrast, entertainment producers instruct the artists in their employ on what is required – and if the artist cannot produce the material that audiences want to see, they can be replaced.

Entertainment producers and higher education – a new relationship

This article is a SOTL piece, presenting a whole-of-program account of a new kind of undergraduate degree that combines expertise traditionally taught in Arts, Business and Law Faculties to give students the skills required to be entertainment producers.

The first cohort will graduate from this degree at the end of 2012 and so at this point in time it is not possible to present data on graduate employment outcomes or Course Experience Questionnaires – both of which will be important in evaluating the success of the course. However, at this point we *are* in a position to present evaluation data by another set of key stakeholders – the entertainment producers who provided initial information about what should be in the degree.

Asked to evaluate the content of the degree, John Stainton, the creator and producer of *The Crocodile Hunter*, describes it as 'one of the most refreshing ideas for a course I've ever heard'. Sean Ryan, the General Manager of Nova 106.9

calls it 'an absolutely brilliant idea' and says that 'industry's looking for it'. Christophe Broadway, Entertainment Manager at Warner Village Theme Parks (which includes Warner Brothers Movie World on the Gold Coast) says that: 'the advantage of a course like this is that you'll come out of it already with the broad base of knowledge to be able to do the sort of things that I do'. Andrew Fee, Creative Producer of Raw Dance, a non-subsidized dance company, says that this will result in a new generation of young producers who are 'a lot more informed'. Adrian Mezzina, Director of The Arcade Creative – a creative collective who market, promote and run large scale events and festivals – says 'It's fantastic. It gives a good grounding to people to work out that it's not just about the creative, it's not just about the business side of things, it's about both coming together' (QUT 2010).

Indeed, the enthusiasm of entertainment producers is such that they have become closely involved in the delivery of the course. In KXB101 Introduction to Entertainment students attend a networking event where they get to mingle with a number of producers – who are happy to give up their time to come along and talk to aspiring young producers. For their final assessment in that unit the students pitch ideas for entertainment events at a live venue that has been booked by The Arcade Creative, and the best ideas are put forward to the company. In KXB102 Global Entertainment the students prepare proposals for internationalizing performances at Warner Brothers Movie World, and the best ideas are passed on to Entertainment Manager Christophe Broadway. This data provides evidence that for stakeholders in the industry – entertainment producers – the degree is evaluated positively.

Conclusion

Many of the producers surveyed by Cameron, Verhoeven and Court did not see the utility of higher education to their careers. Stakeholder comments on the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries make clear that there need not be a rift between producers and higher education. We hope that the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries will provide students with the skills they need to start a healthy career in the Creative Industries. And we hope that by doing this we might contribute to the health of the Creative Industries in Australia. A key element of this might be moving towards a producer-centred culture – an entertainment culture - where cultural products are produced not for the satisfaction of the creator, but of the audience. Because this, after all, is what being a successful producer is all about.

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[1] The listing of skills is based on the discussion document we employed during the curriculum development process.

[2] The irony here is that the first specialized art film studio SCAGL was owned and operated by Pathe – the first globally dominant film studio that not only

produced commercial films en masse but was also in partnership with Edward Benoit-Levy. As a co-owner of the luxury Omnia-Pathe Cinema chain Benoit-Levy successfully lobbied the French government to recognize cinema as an art form and embrace it as high culture in order to protect the commercial interests of his co-venture with Pathe's film empire (Silver 2012)