

Editorial Board of Intercurricular Programmes

Quality Agreements 2019-2024

Report of evaluation talks with educational platforms of academic year 2023-2024

Conducted by: Rosie Haward, Nell Schwan

1. Context

The editorial board organised an open call in February 2023. 13 groups responded with a proposal to start a new educational platform. Based on criteria such as urgency of proposal, feasibility, originality in either educational model, approach, or topic, the editorial board selected 2 groups to start their platform from September 2023 onwards:

BYOB fair (bring your own book)

Cranberry Juice

A coordinator supported the platforms from the start to the end of their funding period.

Both platforms were active before the editorial board supported them.

BYOB worked around the topics of experimental and self publishing, artist books and book fairs. They organised a month-long program at *Enter Enter - space for books*, a host of workshops and readings, a symposium on publishing at the Rietveld, an international book fair on the premises of the Rietveld/Sandberg, and circulated the publications created within the academy to book fairs in the Netherlands and abroad.

Cranberry Juice worked around topics of medical misogyny, the pain gap, as well as reproduction and body politics more broadly. They organised a lecture series with guests, created a podcast archive with the lectures in question, printed a book and created a website that holds the contents of the book (on remedies and horizontal healing practices). They were also invited as speaking guests to a symposium organised by the Jewellery Department.

2. Evaluation conversations

Coordinator of the platforms Rosie Haward and web editor Nell Schwan organised evaluation talks with the platforms in June of 2024. A series of questions were prepared and shared with the platforms beforehand:

1. What were your expectations regarding the program at the start? To what extent have these expectations been fulfilled?
2. What was your most positive experience during this program? Can you describe what it was and why it was such a positive experience?
3. How did this program compare to the regular program of your department? Did they reinforce each other, was there conflict?
4. What was the average time investment in hours per week? How did you experience this?
5. Was this program of added value for your BA/MA study? If so: in what way? If not, can you explain your answer?
6. What tips and advice would you like to give to future platforms? Or if you were organizing another program, what would you do differently?

7. As the editorial board is reaching the end of its funding period, how would you like to see all the platforms remembered at the academy? Which aspects of them do you hope will continue? What is important about the role they have played for you and the school?
8. (to participants) How did you find out about this platform and decide to join?
9. Did being active in the platform help you find work in the field?

Fragments of these conversations can be found in the attachment, see page 3.

3. Conclusions based on the conversations

What the platforms brought to the academy:

- A possibility to invite guests and practitioners whose practice the students find very relevant or inspiring: “It was such a full circle moment. At the beginning of our platform I learned about Maxime Labrit, who is working with male contraception. These whole 3 years I was fantasizing that maybe one day we could meet him, but thinking he’s probably super busy, he’s probably at the other side of the ocean like doing his thing, changing the world. And then all of a sudden it happened so that he could participate in our final event! It was so nice to see and he said it gave him energy to continue as well.”
- They became experts of their own niche topics and their expertise was occasionally fed back into official department teaching: “That we were invited to the Jewellery Department symposium where they had a collaboration with the hospital, that was super cool to see. I think it’s the first time that a platform is invited to do something so public with a department?”
- By having a production budget platform organisers felt like they were stepping away from exploitative practices found elsewhere in the arts: “It was really nice to feel like you don’t have to beg anyone. Especially with this topic (of medical misogyny). To feel like you can ask people to do work, you can pay them, and you’re not reinforcing this system of “sorry, it’s this topic, no funding, you’re gonna have to do it for free”. It was really nice to be in this position ... If you’re working on this we’re gonna pay for it. That’s normal and this is how it should be.”
- Student-led platforms offered another dynamic to learning, and students expressed that there is less of a barrier when attending events organised by other students rather than those by teachers: “It’s less in the content, more in the happening aspect of it. Social dynamics matter quite a lot. I wonder if we are more receptive when something is being organized or knowledge is being shared by fellow students rather than somebody in another power position to ourselves?”

What drawbacks the platforms experienced:

- Researching a niche topic or something that hasn’t yet received wide attention can be a challenge in terms of effort (to inform) and audience engagement: “Because the ground work on our topic hasn’t been laid as much as with certain other topics it was sometimes hard to bring an audience in. But when people actually came they were amazed. Like Rebecca Gompert, who’s actually really established and famous for her activism. The people who just kind of happened to be there for her talk went ‘wow! what the hell?’ We

have a vegan canteen. So why don't we have students who know about ... contraception in all of the sexes?"

- School attendance in and outside of departments seems to be a challenge: "I don't know if it's because of COVID, but I do feel like more and more there is this struggle for people to actually show up for things [in school]. It's a bit sad. Or maybe this is not the kind of thing that people want to tap into, because it's a very heavy topic?"

4. Possible solutions / advice to the editorial board

- Both platforms expressed deep disappointment at the possibility that student-led activities might no longer be supported by the editorial board after the end of 2024: "I really hope that this continues to exist for future students and graduates. This is really a good program which has impacted my study a lot."

Attachment: testimonials of the two conversations

(all the points below are direct quotes taken from the feedback conversation with students and staff involved in the platforms)

As participating students (or staff), what were your expectations regarding the program at the start? To what extent have these expectations been fulfilled?

- "For me the most positive outcome was getting connected with people in Rietveld/Sandberg who are working with the same topics, bringing more people from outside the academy to speak at our events, and feeling supported in what we do.'
- 'This platform being something that we've been doing in the past, my expectations were mostly that we could continue and expand a bit. Becoming more comfortable because we have a budget and the help of Extra Intra. And for me, this has completely been fulfilled because I feel like everything that we wanted to do and all the sort of ambitions that we had plus more we have managed to do.'
- "In the beginning of our Extra Intra time we were under the impression that we would have a meeting with the editorial board to maybe go over our program (with the editorial board) or receive some feedback, and that didn't happen. Maybe that should be rephrased? We wouldn't have minded input. But we did have supportive contact with Rosie throughout."

What was your most positive experience during this program? Can you describe what it was and why it was such a positive experience?

- "We put in so much work on our own in this initiative for 2 years, before funding. Initially, we didn't know what Extra Intra would provide other than help with production. In that sense it was a positive surprise to scale up and professionalize. Such a great opportunity that is quite unique, I think."

- “For me, the best experience came towards the end, during the book fair we held an event and a workshop on a male contraceptive. To see people physically making something that is having an impact.”
- “I felt very fueled when guests told us after [the events] that we have given them so much confidence in their work. Like Cláudia [Pallisé], who has taken part in both publications and two talks, and who was starting to doubt or think she was crazy doing what she was doing. She said ‘you guys have really validated and given me this kind of confidence and energy to keep going.’ That felt powerful, that not only do the guest lecturers inspire us, but we inspire and feed them in return.”
- “I think the most positive thing for me was how much access to school we got at the end of the last book fair that we did this semester. How much work there was from other people for this book fair that we didn't necessarily have to ask [for] ourselves because Nell and Rosie and the rest of the editorial board had helped so much with that. Things went so smooth and that access to school was sort of natural after the first upheaval with the cancellation, of course. But then after that went so nicely. That was really positive for me.”
- “Something that was reassuring was when we were doing a symposium during winter. Which honestly felt a bit rushed because it was the end of the year, and we wanted to do something more, in school. It was a successful event, and I think it was good and nice but there weren't so many people showing up. Out of that came a realization that for us, maybe a more conventional way of organizing something in the topics that we're interested in, like a lecture or symposium, these things don't really work? It was a really reassuring realization that actually the forms of how we do things are maybe not so conventional but they do actually work because they attract more attention. We are like a connective tissue for people to get together.”

How did this program compare to the regular program of your department? Did they reinforce each other, or was there conflict?

- “Even when I was not happy with my own work in my department, it was nice to have this bubble where I felt like I was doing good work with other people. Especially when it's a topic that really matters to you. I feel like this program is also very well suited to freshly graduated people. If not better? Because you have the time and you're really craving some sort of structure and professionalism. I think it's actually such a great opportunity to offer alumni to come back to school and continue in some way, shape, or form to give back to the students.”
- “I don't think there was a conflict, and I think it did reinforce each other, by essentially providing a space for people that work with publishing and printed matter within their departments to kind of have another area of access in school. We had, for example, always worked very closely with the graphic design department.”
- “I think the teachers in my department were quite happy about the fact that we were doing this and bringing more people together. So I don't think teachers will think this is a bad way that you are spending your days.”

- “For me there was almost no gap between being a student and being a professional, in terms of work opportunities that came because we were already running this program as students. I can’t imagine how my life after graduation would have looked without this program. So it was really helpful.”

What was the average time investment in hours per week? How did you experience this?

- “Since we ran this platform for 3 years we experienced it both as students and as alumni. When we were students we didn’t put the same importance on work hours. When you’re a student time stretches easily, and sure, let’s have 5 hour meetings and that’s fine. So as students we definitely invested more time and we didn’t care about being paid.”
- “Going into the Extra Intra period, we estimated working 4 hours a week. And I think most of the time, we did that. But in periods, we went way over, around a workshop, for example.”
- “It just still felt like an upgrade from having done everything for free. Knowing that there was some symbolic kind of payment just made everything feel more professional. And even if we didn’t pay anyone a minimum wage of €1,200 for, I don’t know, graphic design or whatever, I still feel like we were able to pay everyone that we worked with, and that was great.”
- “It has depended. Sometimes almost full time and sometimes not at all. Towards the *Enter Enter* residency it was a 5 day work week. But it was our own project [before we started Extra Intra] and we did it out of our own interest. The editorial board was taken as a sort of extra.”
- “We budgeted 1 or 2 hours per person per week, so there was a lot of overtime, but it was so we would have more money to put towards the project.”

Was this program of added value for your BA/MA study? If so: in what way? If not, can you explain your answer?

- “Compared to my BA program, there was a lot of independence. This really feels like we take the initiative. We are the driving force. I think that’s a great experience to just take the lead and not depend on anything being provided necessarily. It’s a good challenge to see if you actually care about your topic. I think if we didn’t care, we would have stopped after 2 months, you know?”
- “It was very motivating and great to have a broad practice where you have your own work and you have something else that is also a collective. There is a kind of constant momentum when you work with other people. Sometimes when I was a bit stuck with my own practice, it was so nice to have this.”
- “I think we learned so much. About how to work together and how to communicate and how to work professionally and how to produce. How to reach out to people. Just making big moves. We reached out to a big artist and had to sign a screening contract and all these things at a stage where we felt like okay we’re in the middle of our studies and we’re not really experienced but then this collective created a lot of space for us to do a lot of things that, prior, and on our own, we probably wouldn’t have done.”

- “We wrote the proposal while being students, all of us. Back then we felt that within the school, no matter how free or structured all of our departments were, we were all lacking an ability to shape the curriculum: what and how we learn, and at what pace. Especially in my department.”

What tips and advice would you like to give in future projects? Or if you were organizing another program, what would you do differently?

- “It’s really good to have prior experience. It’s a bit much to jump in with an idea and a project proposal and have to establish yourself as a collective during this year. It requires you to know each other and have done a bit of work together before, because it is a very loose, open structure.”
- “I think it was a bit harder than we expected to be in different countries [during part of the work].”
- “If someone’s going to be off or too busy with something else, everyone has to be here and they need to have time for it and need to set a very realistic plan. Also divide roles more specifically in the beginning!”
- “Divide roles and tasks from the start and stick to them. Knowing that you get so much money to do something quite significant at this stage in your studies or career, I would make good agreements on what roles you have and what you can expect from each other.”
- “A tip and also what I wish we did differently is to consider that less is more, also in workload. It does get quite heavy and at times discouraging because it’s just a lot. And if it’s less, it can be done in more detail somehow, when it comes to programming, when it comes to having people over and managing things with the program.”

As the editorial board is reaching the end of its funding period, how would you like to see all the platforms remembered at the academy? Which aspects of them do you hope will continue? And what is important about the role they have played for you and the school?

- “It could always be more money, longer, more time, more structure, whatever. But I feel like it’s so good to have this because it gives you a lot of confidence. Like someone is actually supporting you in what you want to do, and you’re only students. Most of the time I feel like what you do [in school] doesn’t really matter.”
- “How would I like to see the platforms remembered at the academy? Maybe like a statue or some palace. A publication or an online archive?”
- “I don’t think any other departments actually teach you how to actually organise yourself, how to communicate with other people, how to produce events or exhibitions? These things are super important when you become an artist or a producer in the creative field.”
- “To me, personally, most of the learning happened outside of the classroom. Attending events of previous programs and also now being able to organise happenings by ourselves. So I hope that there will be ways to make self-initiation happen at school in the future, and that it can also involve other people. That there will be means to do it.”

- “I think for the program to be memorable, maybe it's nice to add things together in, like, a publication thing and then people can go through it.”