Unpacking and overcoming "edutainment" in library instruction

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In Brief

Within our field, and more widely, there is a way of thinking that equates effective teaching with effective entertaining. This way of thinking can be referred to as a "discourse of edutainment." It underpins some of the publications and conversations that encourage librarians to make their teaching more entertaining, for example by playing improv games or adding humour. In this article, I examine the edutainment discourse in three ways. First, I identify and analyse it. Next, I connect it to larger concerns, such as creating significant learning experiences and wrestling with public speaking fear. To conclude I describe several concepts from the performing arts that could better support librarians working to teach in ways that are as engaging, significant, and enjoyable as possible.

Introduction

"Entertainment value, as well as instructional efficacy, ought to be factored into assessment and design of instructional materials" (Vossler and Watts, 2011).

"We have to compete! Be more interesting, more compelling than anything else in the students' vicinity. And change perspectives; they are not your students: They are your audience" (Mason, 2009).

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"With your theatre background, you must love teaching! You just get up there and put on a show."[1]

The above statements are fascinating. More precisely, it's not these statements at face value that fascinate, nor similar ones peppered throughout library instruction publications and conversations. What strikes me are the ways of thinking embodied by these statements. Why do some librarians encourage one another to focus on entertaining while teaching? Why do some librarians publicly despair over a perceived lack of entertainment value in their instruction? There are no broad policies explicitly directing librarians to prioritize entertainment value. The imperative must have a different source; it must be furthered through other means. Why does it continue, and what are its implications?

With this article, I'll identify what I refer to as the "edutainment discourse" and how it functions within our field.[2] As a discourse, a specific way of thinking that underpins activity and language use, this one equates teaching well with providing entertainment value. Identifying this discourse involves analyzing the understandings, assumptions, and power relationships within spoken and written texts. Examining discourses enables us to uncover why and how such ideas, in textual forms such as conversations or conference programs, come to exist as they do. Why are certain turns of phrase chosen, and not others? Why do some people speak, and not others? Through this questioning, we can observe how discourses "produce and transform social reality, and [...] evaluate the practical consequences of different ways of approaching a particular phenomenon" (Talja 1999, 461). In our case, the phenomenon is library instruction.

There are two central reasons why the edutainment discourse deserves examination. First, like all discourses, this one shapes social practices (e.g., teaching and learning) and directly implicates power structures within our professions and institutions. Changes to practices and structures first require awareness. Second, in my opinion, this discourse undermines librarians' development of sophisticated pedagogical approaches and genuine comfort with teaching. It does so in several ways, which I'll describe shortly.

In the later part of this article, I will describe some concepts with potential to challenge the influence of edutainment within our field. These are substantial concepts from the performing arts that, imported knowledgeably, can support library and information professionals who strive to improve their instructional practices.

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[1] A perspective from a potential colleague during a job interview at the University of Texas, Austin, 2008.

[2] Throughout this article I use "our" and "us" very generally when discussing library and information workers. In the same way, I use "our field" to refer to library and information work.

Penny For Your Discourse

To bring the discourse into focus, and to emphasize that it is not confined to our field, consider an episode of the hugely popular American sitcom, *The Big Bang Theory*. In this episode, "The Thespian Catalyst," physicist Dr. Sheldon Cooper delivers a guest lecture marked by his renowned condescension. Students receive the lecture with stony silence. "I was expecting applause," Sheldon says, "but I suppose stunned silence is equally appropriate."[3]

This experience sparks newfound self-awareness, and Sheldon resolves to become a better teacher. He knows just what to do. He goes next door and knocks three times. His neighbour, Penny, an actor, gives him an acting lesson.

One episode of a sitcom seems slight, but within this one functions the fascinating discourse that compelled me to write this article. In general, comedy relies on an implicit and ubiquitous cultural acceptance of shared knowledge, experience, or stereotypes. In this case, the episode's narrative humour hinges upon our widely-shared acceptance that effective teaching means effective entertaining (in this case, through learning to act). It relies on a belief so pervasive that audiences are not expected to question it.

As this example suggests, the edutainment discourse exists widely. Visiting the *Guardian's* education section, for example, one can witness an ongoing debate over the relationship between entertainment and teaching, including resonant arguments for the importance of entertainment (e.g. Beadle, 2009). Librarian Julia Furay's recent review of theatrically-derived pedagogical strategies summarizes existing edutainment-laden examples, such as "baiting the students with a peripheral stimuli [sic]" and "feigning mistakes" (2014, 212).

Within our field, we can observe that edutainment takes on some distinctive qualities. In particular, the edutainment discourse tangles with the teaching-related anxieties many librarians experience.

Our Edutainment Discourse

The above examples illustrate the presence of the edutainment discourse in wider popular and scholarly cultures. Similarly, the statements at the beginning of this article exemplify how this discourse commonly circulates within our field. There are additional examples from both informal and formal publications. For example, Furay relays her own teaching experiences: "The sessions tend to be a barrage of information: library basics, catalog searching tips, database queries, lots of striking visuals and even a few corny jokes. This is library instruction as if it were a Broadway show" (2014, 209).

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[3] Season 4, Episode 14.

Like all discourses, this one affects and is affected by us to varying extents. As individuals, we are not each equally shaped by it. Judging by its status as a recurring motif at a conference such as LOEX, however, it's safe to claim that edutainment is not a marginalized discourse.[4] Rather, as in its guest appearance in *The Big Bang Theory,* it circulates casually, quite unchallenged.

Discourses have a positioning effect on both individuals and institutions. For example, the debate over what to call people who come to the library — "customers" or "users" or "patrons" — is driven by our recognition that these words signal different beliefs, and by extension, different positions for people and for the libraries they frequent.

The edutainment discourse positions librarians as providers of entertainment. Learners, whomever they may be, are positioned as passive, inattentive audience members, as recipients. Further, learners are positioned as *entertainment-needy*: "They [students] are your audience. Audiences demand entertainment" (Mason, 2009). This assertion of neediness glosses over the fact that this is actually an assumption we have made, which in turn supports our acceptance of edutainment as a user-centred, responsive choice. Libraries are positioned as sites wherein entertainment can be derived.

Now, for each of us as individuals, in any teaching instance (or service provision, or program planning), this discourse is only one of numerous discourses that could be at play. For example, a related discourse constructs information as a commodity, librarians as marketers, and students as customers and consumers (Hoffman and Polkinghorne, 2010). Even drawing a casual equation between librarians and teachers, as I and many other instruction-invested librarians do, viewing our patrons primarily as learners: this a discursively-inflected choice. I mention this to highlight that discourses are not good or bad or monolithic in any easy sense. It's not *bad* to think about the entertainment value of one's instruction. However, we can ask: should entertainment be a *predominant* instructional concern?

Problematizing Edutainment In Library Instruction

In our daily practices, we make instructional choices based on our local contexts and constraints, and library instruction can feel filled with compromises. Many of us are ambivalent about having to teach at all, as researchers Heidi Julien and Jen (J.L.) Pecoskie found in their study of librarians' experiences of the teaching role (2009). Questioning edutainment can help build a more amenable environment for active improvements to these circumstances. One way to undertake such questioning is to analyze edutainment to its implied conclusions.

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[4] LOEX is a large American library instruction conference organized by the LOEX (Library Orientation Exchange) organization. 2015 marked its 43rd annual conference.

Below is an example of a publication underpinned by the edutainment discourse. This is the abstract for a 2009 conference session, “Beating the Competition: Librarian as Performance Artist.” It appeared in the program of LOEX, a long-running mainstream library instruction conference.

I’ll quote the abstract in full. Of his session, librarian Marc Mason writes:

> “Libraries have to compete.” We hear it often enough: Bookstores, Google, coffee shops...There are many resources that draw the attention of our students (cell phones/text messaging, Facebook/MySpace, sleep), and we have to work harder to get them to come to us. But getting them to the library is just the beginning.
>
> So we have to compete! Be more interesting, more compelling than anything else in the students’ vicinity. And change perspectives; they are not your students:
>
> They are your audience.
>
> Audiences demand entertainment. It’s no longer enough to be a knowledgeable teacher with a strong instructional paradigm. You must also be a performer, captivating students with wit, creativity and charisma.
>
> Join an Arizona State University librarian as he shares instructional strategies that incorporate skills developed from stand-up and improv comedy to turn instruction sessions into entertaining workshops that keep student attention. And learn what happened when he began teaching “performance skills” workshops for librarians that are designed to encourage them to abandon traditional approaches to interacting with groups, tap their creativity, and rely more on their wits.
>
> If you’re looking for new ways to beat the competition, thinking about releasing your inhibitions and embracing your inner “theatre geek”, or want to polish your own performance skills, check out this exciting and hilarious session and go home with a grin! You’ll discover a new sense of fun, make your students laugh a little, and add some silliness to a profession that can take itself a bit too seriously. (2009)

Unpacked, this abstract reveals the implications of edutainment. When library instruction equals entertainment, it becomes difficult to evade comparisons with other sources of entertainment: bookstores, Google. When librarians are asked to provide entertainment, this signals an assumed gap between how librarians *are* and how we *should be*. Here, librarians possess multifaceted deficiencies. We are inhibited and overserious, but we need to be more interesting than anything else nearby. This abstract sounds encouraging and I assume it carries supportive intentions, but its subtext is gravely judgemental, reaffirming well-worn insecurities: “It’s no longer enough to be a knowledgeable teacher with a strong instructional paradigm.”

When effective teaching equals providing entertainment value, particularly when this equation relies upon an unsophisticated understanding of performance, the resulting pedagogical recommendations are so deterministic as to be incompatible with the complexities of teaching. If we just add wit and charisma, then our instruction will be good. If we just add some “silliness,” then our instruction will be good. *If we just . . . , then our instruction will be good.*

Like other edutainment-influenced texts, there are two significant elements of teaching and learning that are noticeably deemphasized here: the content of our instruction and the students. The content frequently taught by librarians does not hold up well in the edutainment discourse. Common examples of how this is expressed include reservations about whether library instruction can actually be interesting at all:

"Let's face it, IL [information literacy] *holds interest to only a small circle of friends."*[5]

"If you have anything that makes talking about libraries less boring, I want to hear about it!"[6]

"Let's face it: library instruction can be boring to teach and boring to listen to. As librarians, we all know the value of library instruction and its importance to our students. However, we are kidding ourselves (no pun intended) if we think that most students will find the topic fascinating, or even mildly interesting" (Trefts and Blakselee 2000, 369).

In statements such as these, content serves as a receptacle for broader concern about overall instructional effectiveness. Edutainment frames our content as inherently boring, and in doing so, entrenches itself in our most basic insecurities.

Students are also deemphasized; focus dwells on us. The edutainment discourse, then, reinforces doubt about the interestingness of our teaching, while at the same time encouraging a specific conception of student need that happens to rationalise edutainment-driven teaching.

Reasons To Reach Beyond Edutainment

There are three main reasons why it's important to consider instructional choices that reflect ways of thinking other than edutainment.

First, the purpose of library instruction is to provide significant learning experiences. Edutainment, in our discipline, diverts us from that primary goal. When our focus is directed toward entertainment value, when we prioritize a goal to be entertaining, this can pull us toward a different orbit. Creating significant learning experiences is challenging. Take assessment for example, a growing concern within libraries. When assessing the quality of an instruction session, it's easier to measure whether students had an entertaining, attention-getting experience than it is to measure whether they had a significant learning experience. Edutainment provides a diversion, not a shortcut.

Second, edutainment complicates our efforts to overcome a phobia that affects many of us: fear of public speaking. A variety of studies conducted over the past twenty years have established that

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[5] From an Information Literacy Instruction Discussion List (ILI-L) listserv posting, February 15, 2008.

[6] From an ILI-L listserv posting, January 14, 2014.

fear of public speaking affects between 20% and 34% of the general population, making it "the single most commonly feared situation" (Botella 2010, 407). Additionally, many of us experience instruction-specific discomfort. When Kaetrena Davis studied teaching-related anxiety among subscribers to the Information Literacy Instruction Discussion List (ILI-L), 63% of respondents reported such anxiety (2007; Schulte 2009 provides an open-access summary). Public speaking anxiety is a serious and complex phenomenon. Edutainment can exacerbate it by adding yet more pressure — you've got to entertain! add jokes! practice improv! — that is tangential to evidence-based methods of addressing fear (cf. Bodie, 2010). Edutainment is at most a balm, not a cure.

Third, we have a responsibility to think critically about edutainment in relation to the ongoing marketization of education. The term "edutainment" comes to LIS from education, where it originally described new technologies, such as educational software, sold to teachers with promises of increased student attention through fun features such as animations (Okan 2009, 255). In conceiving of students as recipients to be entertained, edutainment contributes to a transactional environment where students expect a fun experience to consume. As such, the edutainment discourse is incompatible with the active, constructivist aspirations articulated by the authors of the Association of College and Research Libraries' new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. For librarians who focus on critical information literacy, aiming through their teaching to problematize library and information systems and to equip students to contribute to change in the world, edutainment is even more irreconcilable.

Other Concepts

Of course we want to, and should, provide instruction that is *engaging* for learners. We know that engagement makes learning more significant; in fact, "student engagement is one of the most well-established predictors of achievement" (Harbour et al. 2015, 5). There are many definitions of engagement, but among the most useful is the one articulated by education researchers Jennifer A. Fredricks, Phyllis C. Blumenfeld, and Alison H. Parks, who describe engagement as a "multidimensional concept" that combines three facets: behavioural (participation, involvement), cognitive (thoughtfulness, persistence), and emotional (positive and negative reactions, social ties) (2004, 60). In our field, we have left the complexities of fostering in-class engagement relatively unexamined, a gap that has given edutainment an opening.

As a way to begin to fill this gap, it's useful to acknowledge teaching as a performance, specifically as "a performance that unfolds and evolves over time to suit the needs of our students and our own needs as teaching librarians" (Rae, 2015). Indeed, many of us understand this instinctively. When I studied librarians' in-the-moment experiences of teaching, I asked all participants whether, when they are teaching, they feel they are performing. Each participant unhesitatingly said yes (2013). It is entirely possible to focus on performance without dwelling on how entertaining we are. By doing so, we can identify some valuable food for thought.

I'm going to mention several concepts from the performing arts, specifically from the theatre. For anyone working to create more engaging learning experiences, these ideas are potentially meaningful. There is much more to each concept than could be captured in a single article, and I'm sure there are additional useful concepts as well. I would welcome an ongoing discussion in which these concepts and others can be brought into detailed conversation with our instruction practices.

Acting

Although I discuss acting in workshops and presentations, I would not argue that librarians should study acting.[7] A key distinction that I will mention here, however, is that acting is not the same thing as performing. The two should not be conflated. We know when we are acting, and we know when we are performing but not acting. There are many situations, such as witnessing a eulogy, in which we watch others perform, but not act. Further, we can detect when others are *trying* to act. There is no reason to assume that students do not possess the same instincts, a thought to keep in mind when experimenting with acting techniques in library instruction. More important than importing ideas from acting is the fundamental task of becoming comfortable with one's own physical presence — body and voice — which I discuss below.

Physicality

"I found little physicalities in the role, and something always happened when I put those long, flowing robes on. That's when I felt Voldemort."[8]

That's British actor Ralph Fiennes speaking in an interview about his approach to a specific acting challenge. He crafted this performance by figuring it out from the outside in (from exterior to interior). He found Voldemort's physicality, then he found Voldemort.

Physicality is a broad term encompassing the ways in which we communicate with our bodies, through our postures and movements, expressions and gestures. Students of acting spend years studying physicality. My acting textbook from my first-year course is two-thirds finished before it mentions anything *but* physicality. The primary goal of these efforts, prerequisite to acting, is to become comfortable in our own bodies and voices so that we can best use them to communicate.

Our presence in the classroom is embodied. Even webinars are embodied, because we use our voices to deliver them. Comfort with our embodied presence is as fundamental to effective face-to-face teaching as it is to any performance. Despite this, physicality — the role of the body and

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[7] Unless you feel like it.

[8] Voldemort is the central antagonist in the Harry Potter books and films. This quote is from a Newsweek interview.

voice — is largely overlooked in the library instruction literature. This is a gap that deserves our attention.

Observing our own physicality can be a challenge, because it means confronting habits, insecurities, and the assumptions we hold about ourselves. For example, we may be leaning on long-held stylistic and mechanical techniques that have always "gotten us through" our teaching (e.g., pre-planned searches). However, attending to physicality can eventually enable us to reconnect with the core of what we're trying to do, and further, to see "what kinds of gestures, movements, and vocal tone evolve organically out of [our] own enthusiasm and personality, and the content of [our] message" (Glickstein 53). There are many resources describing ways to work toward this, but *Be Heard Now!,* by public speaking luminary Lee Glickstein (1998), is a great place to start.

Attending to physicality also enables us to reach beyond solely cognitivist instructional strategies. Performance anxiety provides an excellent example. We often try to cope with anxiety by applying impression management strategies, such as over-preparing and rehearsing repeatedly. Researchers refer to these as "safety behaviors" whose purpose is to "prevent a person's feared outcome;" they are primarily "self-concealment strategies designed to prevent one from having one's perceived self-flaws exposed to evaluative others in social situations" (Rowa et al. 2015, 306). Glickstein calls these strategies "Fear Band-Aids" (129). Acknowledging that anxiety has a physical dimension (clammy palms, pulse racing, et cetera) enables us to regain some equilibrium and comfort physically, through something as basic as increasing circulation (many people find it helpful). Attending to physicality is a complex, long-term project, but it contributes to our ability to engage with teaching, and in turn, to engage others in learning.

People contend differently with physicality, partly by choice and partly not. Performances are social, and there is the question of how others perceive us, which is never entirely within our control. Very recently, for example, researchers Ebony O. McGee and Lasana Kazembe documented black faculty members' experiences making academic presentations, including the expectations and perceptions they face when presenting to predominantly white audiences (2015). The research participants recounted "similar narratives about the anticipated entertainment value [they] were expected to offer and the skepticism they encountered about the academic value of their presentations" (3). McGee and Kazembe detail a variety of strategies, such as humour, used by black scholars to cope with racialized biases. These findings are among many that illuminate the complexities of physicality and remind us that no performance is isolated from the larger world and its inequalities.

Improv

I include improv because I've met numerous librarians who are comfortable with presenting and lecturing, but whose fears flare up when they anticipate someone asking them a question requiring an extemporaneous, off-the-cuff reply. Kaetrena Davis's study of library workers found that 40% of respondents worry about "being able to answer tough questions" (2007, 88).

Ideas from improv theatre can help, I believe. I say "ideas" because my claim is not that everyone should rush to sign up for improv classes.[9] This isn't necessary in order to ponder these ideas and persevere with them in everyday life. The best improvisers give highly intelligent, decisive performances. Improv has nothing to do, necessarily, with being funny. Its principles include the following.

Don't block. Say yes. Blocking is a cardinal sin of improv. It involves dismissing, ignoring, or negating others' ideas, or "offers." Saying yes is its opposite, which can be attempted in the classroom. A question from a student is an offer. For example, "Why can't there be one search box for all the information?" is a good question, and a frequent one. It can also trigger the blocking impulse. We might exhale and say *that's a really big question. I wish we had time for a lecture on the political economy of information.* Instead, try. Take the challenge of providing the best answer or discussion you can in the time you have. That's saying yes.

Make a choice. Don't wimp. Teaching and improv are performances, and performances are made of choices. Choices are a base unit of analysis when thinking about how we consciously create performances. Teaching, like improv, is ephemeral; every time it happens it's unique, and then it's over, and it's unreproducible. Under these circumstances, there is no benefit to not making a choice, also known as wimping. For example, "Why can I download some library ebooks but not others?" is a good question. We might think, as we exhale, *well. That's a question that could be answered in a few ways.* Then, considering the circumstances, we choose the best answer in the moment. In this way, we do something quite important: we accept that we may not provide a perfectly-formed, comprehensive answer, which is generally a fantasy anyhow. ("I don't know, to be honest. But I know how we can find out!" is not a wimp answer.)

Listen. This same principle from reference training is central to both improv and teaching. One practice that interferes with listening is scripting, which I'll discuss next, and suggest scoring as an alternative.

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[9] Unless you feel like it.

Rather Than Scripts, Scores

Some librarians use scripts when they teach. Julia Furay is not the only librarian who could admit that "everything is scripted. My library instruction sessions are prepared down to the tiniest detail" (2014, 209). There can be an impulse to write a script, a detailed plan of what precisely to say and do, in order to ensure control within a class, to ameliorate performance anxiety, or to enforce a specific idea of consistency across numerous classes.[10] Sometimes there is a group of library workers teaching a large number of similar classes, such as first-year English, and a script can seem like a useful tool. Using scripts in these ways introduces hazards that negate their presumed benefits.

First, let's take the case of the shared script ensuring consistency across instruction sessions. In this situation, a script may increase public speaking anxiety among those being made to use it. This is because scripts authored by other people force us to use words and ways of thinking that are not our own (Wilder 1999).

Have you ever enjoyed seeing different actors play the same role? If performances were interchangeable because they use the same script, why would we bother making new ones? We could just watch Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* and call it a day. The answer is that a script is a fraction of a performance. Actors, within the context of a production, contribute the rest.

Non-acting performers are in the same situation: even where there is a script, it could never be the totality of the performance, or enforce "consistency" across performances. Engagement problems arise when the script is prioritized and the performer is overlooked. When it comes to scripts for teaching and presenting, Lee Glickstein gets to the heart of the issue: a script creates a barrier.

> Usually, our fear is that the audience will sit in judgment of us. We forget that most people hope we won't embarrass ourselves — as they're afraid *they* would embarrass themselves if they were in our shoes — and they look at us with at least some degree of support and goodwill.
>
> That support is there for us to accept—or not. If a speaker doesn't pause to take it in before he speaks [...] it is as if he is holding a stop sign up to the group and saying, "No, thank you. I don't need your support. I can do this *myself.*"
>
> This separates him from the audience, severely limits the rapport that he can establish with them — even if he does everything else right. The first thing he has said to the group is "Stay away! Don't connect with me." (1998, 76-77)

Rather than scripting our instruction, we could consider artists Anna and Lawrence Halprin's "scoring" as a way to provoke new ideas about how to map key moments in our teaching (1969). This is scoring not in the familiar musical sense but in a more abstract sense. While lesson plans

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[10] NB: I'm speaking broadly, not ascribing these intentions to Ms. Furay specifically.

are usually linear, emerging from learning goals, scores are freer. They are often expressed in symbols, rather than text, like a sports play being documented dynamically by a coach. Scores "are meant to improve on an ongoing practice by breaking down unoriginal habits and hierarchies and spreading around the decision-making power" (Nguyen and Beard, 2013). In creating a teaching score, you can predetermine your goals and intentions, while also identifying how students will contribute important choices.[11] For example, they might choose areas of emphasis and the order of the discussion. In this way, students are acknowledged as co-creators of each instruction session. This can help to create an environment where more engagement becomes possible.

Defining The Situation

This is a short point derived tangentially from the theatre by a social scientist. Erving Goffman was a Canadian sociologist who formulated the idea that in everyday life we are all continuously performing. This doesn't mean we're false, or we're pretending to be someone we're not. It means that through our actions we constantly construct and alter our self-presentation depending on our circumstances (Goffman 1959).

One element of Goffman's dramaturgical theory of self-presentation is "defining the situation." He argues that social interactions proceed best when everyone involved understands what's going on. This is a concept whose potential benefit to librarians is obvious. Unlike teachers and professors, who have ongoing interactions with students within institutional settings and power relationships that are familiar to all involved, librarians are often asked to just show up to class. We often have no pre-existing relationship with the group of students whom we've been tasked to teach. It's our responsibility to define that situation. Doing so can help to acknowledge and to address the fact that students, teaching faculty, and librarians often have diverse ideas about libraries and about what we teach. Here are some things that I regularly choose whether or not and how to define for students in my instruction sessions:

- what the purpose of my presence is,
- who I am,
- what I do for students,
- what the library is, and
- what the library can do for students.

If we're reflecting honestly on how to convey this information and bring everyone in the classroom into shared common understanding, we will encounter the tension that exists between honesty and idealisation. This is what Goffman, generally put, called "back stage" and "front

[11] I recommend Betty Nguyen and Dena Beard's interview with Anna Halprin for more detail and examples.

stage" personae. For example, we may have critical opinions about a particular citation software. We will be conscious of how we choose to share these opinions in the classroom, because we may also bear an institutional imperative to promote this software as a library service. We are all constantly defining the situation, and with it, making the choices that construct both self-presentation and identity.

Conclusion

In this article, I've written toward two main goals. I've identified and questioned the discourse of edutainment as it functions within our field. I've also described several concepts from the performing arts that can help us engage with learners and will serve us better than prioritizing entertainment value.

The discourse of edutainment, in our field, involves our insecurities, and as such, it enables a magnetic sort of solipsism. But teaching is not all about us. It is about learners. The performing-arts concepts I've offered can enable us to engage in new, flexible ways both with teaching and with our teaching circumstances. This could have at least two benefits. First, we could focus more squarely on the social complexities of teaching, on learners and what it means for them to be genuinely engaged by our teaching. Second, we could develop more skepticism toward techniques imported glibly from other disciplines.

Entertainment can be a feature of high-quality learning experiences. It emerges from planning, comfort, and enjoyment. Entertainment is wonderful, but it is a by-product.

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