Jefferson College of Population Health

The Science of Entertainment-Education: Historical Perspectives and New Directions

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The Wilson Center’s “Africa in Transition” Event
July 10, 2019
Acknowledgements

Mentors
• Drexel University
• American University

Partners and Funders
• Population Media Center
• Local staff and partners

Colleagues and Fellow Scholars
• Communication and public health researchers and practitioners around the globe

Meeting Miguel Sabido, pioneer of entertainment-education (April 2018)
An Academic Definition

• **Entertainment-Education (EE):** The process of designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms and change overt behavior (Rogers & Singhal, 1999)
Brief History

• Roots in oral and performing arts traditions
• 1940’s: The Lawsons (Australia)
• 1950’s: The Archers (United Kingdom)
• 1960’s and 1970’s: Sabido soap operas
• Dissemination by PCI Media Impact, Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs
• Today: a global strategy that has been implemented in countries around the world
Theory Alongside History

What is a theory?
• Systematic way of understanding events, behaviors, and situations
• A model or a pathway; an “explanation”
• Set of accepted beliefs/interrelated concepts

Why do we use theory?
• To identify potential solutions
• To understand why people behave the way they do
• To plan, design, and evaluate EE programs
Selected Cross-Cutting Theories Applied to EE

- Social Cognitive Theory
- Diffusion of Innovations
- Ideation
- Social Norms
- Narrative Persuasion/Audience-Centered Theories
The Current State of EE Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Findings from a Literature Review of EE Practice from 2005-2016*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Goal</td>
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<td>Program Focus</td>
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<td>Geographical Location</td>
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<td>Key Topic</td>
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<td>Channel</td>
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<td>Genre</td>
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The Current State of EE Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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# The Current State of EE Evidence

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<td><strong>Research Methods</strong></td>
<td>Quantitative (61.9%)</td>
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<td>Mixed Methods (24.6%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Qualitative (13.5%)</td>
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<td><strong>Research Design</strong></td>
<td>Post-only (40.5%)</td>
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<td>Pre and post (27.0%)</td>
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<td>Randomized controlled trial (23.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>100-249 participants (26.8%)</td>
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<td>500 or more participants (22.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Reported Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>Medium/intermediate outcomes (61.1%)</td>
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<td>High/behavior + social change 18.3%</td>
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<td>Low (20.6%)</td>
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Participatory Methods

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### Participatory Methods for Entertainment-Education

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**THEORY**

Recent Theorizing Part 1: Social Norms

Social Norms

- Definition: “a pattern of collective behavior that is reinforced, propagated, and sustained by unwritten social rules” (WHO, 2010)
- Behaviors are influenced by norms, which often occur without conscious thought (e.g., queuing into the back of a line) but also sometimes part of conscious behavior choices
- The literature is dense (descriptive norms, injunctive norms, reference groups, outcome expectations)

Social Norms and EE

- EE programs often seek to change or shift norms by creating demand through narratives and characters (e.g., norms around uptake of modern contraception, ideal family size, etc.)
- EE and social norms have been studied for some time
- Little consensus on how exactly how norms should be measured
Example from India

- “Kyunki...Jeena Issi Ka Naam Hai” (Because... That’s What Life Is)
- Flagship program of UNICEF India
- Television drama, 501 episodes, began in 2008
- Maternal and child health topics
- Large quantitative evaluation - 27,000 survey respondents (women, husbands, and mothers-in-law) over three time periods in 6 states
- Multivariate analysis to explore direct relationship between exposure and descriptive norms
- Higher level of exposure > positive and significant change in social norms
- EE “super users”

Recent Theorizing Part 2: Narrative Persuasion

Narrative Persuasion
• Considers the uniquely persuasive role of storytelling
• Being engaged in a story reduces counterarguing (or resistance)
• Narrative persuasion constructs include: identification with characters, narrative transportation, and narrative engagement

Narrative Persuasion and EE
• The hypothesis that EE is effective because audiences are swept into stories has been tested for some time
• Scales are not typically tested outside of the Global North
• How narrative persuasion works to change or shift social norms as a result of EE is unknown
Example from Mozambique

- “Ouro Negro” (Black Gold)
- UNICEF Mozambique, WFP, UNFPA, Ministry of Education, PCI Media Impact
- Radio drama, began in 2015
- Topics: Maternal and child health; HIV/AIDS; child protection; WASH
- Mixed methods pre/post evaluation - surveys + focus groups in 5 provinces
  - Participatory methods
- Two research questions
  - Relationship between exposure and narrative persuasion
  - Relationship between exposure and social norms
- Exposure > predicted narrative persuasion in multivariate analysis
- Exposure did not predict social norms

Concluding Thoughts on EE Science

• There is a rich body of literature demonstrating EE “works”
• EE scholars continue to unwrap exactly how the strategy engenders individual and social change
  • What is the role of social norms in the theoretical pathway of EE?
  • Not everything is influenced by social norms
  • Is narrative persuasion the “secret ingredient” to EE?
• Theory and practice should co-exist within communities
• EE must be part of a suite of delivery and supply approaches to most effectively impact topics across the global development agenda
Selected Publications

Journal Articles


Book Chapter

Questions?

Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn’t know the first thing about either.

(Marshall McLuhan)

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