

EHPS Conference: Inspiration for teaching, too!

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As an assistant professor in The Netherlands, my workload is divided between 60% teaching and 40% research. Visiting a conference, presenting my work, networking, and learning about studies from other labs is something I usually see belonging to the “research” part of my job. The 2015 Cyprus EHPS conference, however, has very much inspired me as a teacher, too. In this piece I would like to highlight this unanticipated, but very fruitful impact of the conference.

Together with a colleague of mine, I will be lecturing in a course on Intervention Mapping this semester. It is a new course in a newly developed Health Promotion masters program at our university, and frankly, we wouldn't consider ourselves to be experts on this particular topic at all. Of course, we did know that intervention research is a big theme in the EHPS community, and that we have many intervention mapping experts even from our own country (particularly from Maastricht University). Hence, our EHPS 2015 conference mission was to gain beyond-textbook knowledge about intervention mapping.

The first thing we did was arranging a meeting with Gjalt-Jorn Peters, who (besides being a fabulous Cypriot folk dancer, as we learned at the conference dinner) has a lot of experience with intervention mapping. He was able to answer all of our questions, provided some interesting examples and, very usefully, pinpointed specific aspects that students tend to find challenging.

Reassuring us that intervention mapping isn't as complicated as one might think (wait, or did he say it WAS that complicated...?), we thought this was a very valuable meeting.

Next, we set out to visit talks on particular aspects of intervention studies. For example, the presentation by Pepijn van Empelen was very useful in detailing how the “Dream, Think, Act” intervention was developed and evaluated (thanks!). What I always like is that conference presentations, generally more so than papers, allow for some inside information on particular challenges or things gone wrong. This type of information was exactly what we thought would

be interesting to share with our students and therefore these talks really had additional value on top of the papers we would read.

Last, we talked to John de Wit, who kindly agreed to give a guest lecture in the course on his experience in developing and

testing interventions in the context of AIDS prevention. In fact, this will be a skype-lecture all the way from Australia and we are very curious to see how it works out.

Altogether, this input from others, together with our own brainstorm-on-the-beach moments, discussing how to structure the lectures, made for a very fruitful conference and a hopefully very interesting course.

P.S. At Utrecht University we always welcome international students. For example, we have an English-taught Social and Health Psychology research



masters program and several elective courses (e.g., on Nudging) that are open to students from abroad. Please feel free to refer your students to me for further information or check www.uu.nl/masters.



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