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Developing professional identity in tertiary art and design: Learning from animated human agents through artistic & scientific scenarios

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This presentation examines selected "Animated Encounters" produced from a strategic university funded project. The larger research study investigates how students' real-world learning and Professional Identity (PI) formation can be articulated from Year One across three university faculties: Art & Design, Science and Medicine. In this slice of research in progress, an initial online survey (n= 85) Year 1 & 2, Art and Design students and (n=100) Year 1 & 2, Science/Medicine students revealed emergent, qualitative industry specific 'dilemmas of practice'. A dilemmas framework was selected to engage students' with previously hidden and complex understandings of practice across specialised disciplinary contexts. This snapshot includes the identification of written quotes to exemplify dilemmas, translation into visual storyboards and selection of creative media to maximise learning. Rototyped animation, conceived as an 'encounter' facilitates transformation of worked examples, using animated pedagogical agents to interrogate real world problems. Moving beyond listening and speaking, animated media privileges visual transfer of information to open dialogue as a "catalyst for conversation" around contested practices. The visual dimension is crucial in informing how people with diverse cultural backgrounds might perceive affective behavior of virtual humans in learning environments. The presentation is informed by Wittgenstein's conception of sense and nonsense specifically the significance of interstices and what cannot be said, but can only be shown. The project is designed to enhance the capabilities, skills and knowledge of students through learning scenarios so that students are provided with the necessary attributes to equip them to pursue professional careers in creative industries.