

NATIONAL
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ARTS



“ADMISSION, COURSEWORK AND DIPLOMA ASSESSMENT CRITERIA”

GEECT Conference NATFA, Sofia, Bulgaria (22-26 Oct 2012)

The GEECT Conference 2012 was made possible by the generous support and organisation of NATFA, GEECT and CILECT. It hosted 40 participants from 22 schools in 17 countries.

In this publication you will find the final transcripts of the sound files that were received by the CILECT Secretariat and edited by the Executive Director. I hope it will be helpful in raising and answering questions as well as in giving us all the chance to compare, learn and use the information and the methodological/pedagogical approaches delivered by our colleagues.

I wish you pleasant time reading it and thinking over it!

Prof. Dr. Stanislav Semerdjiev
Executive Director, CILECT

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“Admission, Coursework and Diploma Assessment Criteria” - GEECT Conference, NATFA, Sofia, Bulgaria (22-26 Oct 2012)

Panel 1: Evaluation Criteria of Students in Art Schools

Moderator: Lubomir Halachev

Lubomir Halachev: Good morning, everybody. I see that the hall is almost full. Let me once again welcome you to our conference. I am Lubomir Halachev from NATFA and practically, I am your host and moderator for this panel. I would like first to give the floor to Marc Nicolas who is the President of GEECT and then to my colleague and friend Prof. Stanislav Semerdjiev who actually initiated and designed this conference two years ago.

Marc Nicolas: Thank you, Lubo. I would like to thank you for organizing this conference. We usually have two conferences a year and this one which is about evaluation was planned, I think, three years ago in Beijing. Many of us thought that it was time to have again a meeting on the subject ten years after our conference on the same topic. Maybe I will say a few words at the end of the conference on the activities of GEECT as we have a full agenda for the year to come.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Well, we already welcomed you last night in a very traditional Bulgarian way. So, I hope that none of you has a headache this morning after the party. As Marc said, the conference was planned in Beijing and if I am correct it was a proposal that we made together almost at the same time – the International Film School in Cologne and the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts in Bulgaria. It took some years to have the conference organized but we are very happy to have you here. Basically, the idea of the conference is that we share our knowledge and experience of the criteria for evaluation of the work of our students. Especially in Europe, with the Erasmus programme and all the other programmes that we use for student or teacher exchange, bilateral or trilateral contracts, we need to have some kind of an idea who evaluates the students and in what way they are evaluated in the different schools. In some countries there is a long tradition and there are very precise and objective ways to evaluate the work of the students. But there are other countries for which this is a novelty and these countries start only now or haven't even yet started to give such a process serious consideration. So, I think that this conference will help us. I am not going to talk more about it in general because basically our first session is actually dedicated to a general presentation on the evaluation criteria of students in art schools and our speaker is John Burgan. So, John, the floor is yours.

John Burgan: Good morning. My presentation will include about 50% of presentations I've done so far so I plead your intelligence on that. But I hope to be focused on the subject of today. To be a little polemical I must admit that when I saw the name of the whole conference submission course record diploma assessment criteria my heart sank a little bit. And that's not because of being in Bulgaria where I've just spent a wonderful weekend in Blagoevgrad riding horses and drinking beer. However, you speak to any colleagues in the UK; the word assessment is something that weighs rather heavily on us. So, my presentation may have a slight polemical edge, but at any rate, I hope I'll raise some important questions that we can discuss. In fact, the first thing I want to briefly bring your attention to is the whole way that in English we will swap between these two phrases "assessment" and "evaluation" in perhaps a way that isn't entirely clear. And the first thing that I did when I was suggested to open the proceedings today was that I went to Google and Google images to see what I could find out there on assessment and evaluation and there's actually quite a lot. And you can find all interesting sorts of diagrams which show you what assessment is, what evaluation is, and somewhere in the middle where the two of them meet. There are a lot of academics out there who are spending a lot of time and energy trying to define these two. Here's another one, "the purpose of assessment is to increase quality, and evaluation is to judge quality". And that in a way raises the first question, the quality of what, what is this quality that is being assessed or evaluated. There are other

logos that I found that would seem to suggest that assessment and evaluation are not exactly the same. So, I returned to the dictionary, just to have a quick check of the word assessment in English, the noun, here we are already, assessment is the evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something. So, definitely, there's something to do with measurement and in fact, originally, if we go back and look at where the word comes from it has something to do with the process of setting a value on real or personal property. Usually, for the purpose of taxation and that is the root of it in Late Middle English coming from Medieval Latin. It has absolutely something to do with assessing taxes. The word evaluation, however, is it exactly the same? Well, it is an act or instance of evaluating or appraising. If we extend that we might say that's the determination of a subject's merit, worth or significance. The roots we have rather later from that notion of the French of evaluate, to find the value of. So, if assessment is something to do with measurement and taxes, then there would seem to be some difference between the two and of course today our subject is indeed evaluation criteria of students in art schools.

Let's think what art schools do as opposed to other disciplines in higher education. I work at an institution, the Newport Film School that is part of the University of Wales where we have other departments in business, accounting, statistics and all of these wonderful subjects. Being under the same roof, are they being judged, are they being assessed, are they being evaluated on the same criteria? Let's think about what we do in art and film schools. Here is a quote: "I don't know what good composition is, there's some kind of rightness and wrongness, and sometimes I like rightness, and sometimes I like wrongness." Composition is like that. Do these sound like very rigorous terms that somebody would recognize in the context of quality assurance? "It is important to take bad pictures. It's the bad ones that have to do with what you have never done before, it can make you recognize it when you see it again." So, this notion, in particular in art schools and film schools, the importance of making mistakes... I don't know how important it is to make mistakes in statistics and accounting, but certainly, as film schools and art schools are concerned, it seems to be part of that process and I would raise the question "How does therefore, failure tally with this culture of excellence? In the UK everything is excellent, the centres of excellence, excellence of excellence. I can't hear that word ever again. In Prague, at the presentation last year, this is just to give a very quick gloss... there were various colleagues that gave presentations already a year ago on assessment. So, I remember the one of dffb when Jan Schütte explained how the dffb is not a university, and therefore is outside that system. There's a lot of evaluation going on. You are talking a lot about how the films are working, but you are not necessarily giving a very precise breakdown of grades. I was at the National Film School in Denmark about a month ago talking to Tina Sørensen and she was explaining to me the difficulty that they have of connecting to other schools for joint ventures because they also are somehow outside the university system. I think everybody here knows that the National Film School in Denmark has something of a good reputation but in other ways they don't fit in. The European Film College in Denmark where I myself was teaching the doc programme for a couple of years is a folk high school and is also outside the university system. It was fascinating to be in an environment which has a very intensive process of evaluation of students' work but you leave that institution without any grades or marks. You just get a nice framed certificate saying that you've been there. So, those are some of the exceptions to the rule, if we are talking about a formal process of quality assurance. I attended the National Film and Television School back in the early 90-ties when Colin Young was still there. That now has an MA programme that is validated by the Royal College of Arts. The London Film School is now also connected to the London Met, so it is a very typical movement in the UK that previously autonomous or semi-autonomous institutions now are part of the higher education system and are being validated. Indeed, the Newport Film School, as I mentioned earlier, is part of the University of Wales, Newport and as such is a film school within the university system. Of course, this has, as we all know, and I am not going to go into detail because we know this, it has very much to do with the Bologna process

which is examining standards and quality of the higher education qualifications in the 47 member states, of which only 27 are EU members, so it is much wider than the EU, the most recent member being Kazakhstan. I might just illustrate my own experience of returning to the UK after being 16 years away and being hit by a tsunami of assessment.

Here's a module that I taught at my first job at an UK University. I did seem to be confronted by something like 90 students on a *mise-en-scène* workshop that I ran, stolen entirely from Andrzej Mellin of the Łódź Film School. And it was a bizarre experience in many ways. The model was, as the department thought fit when I arrived, a series of lectures and workshops and there would be a single film that would be assessed at the end of the module. Curiously, unlike anything I had experienced this was purely written feedback, so the students didn't talk about the film. You wrote a sort of a critique which you'd send them with very particular assessment criteria going into unbelievable detail. Is it in focus, is it out of focus? Is the story engaging, is it not engaging? A binary system of assessment hopefully made things clear. There was definitely an absolute focus on the finished film, as the product, the thing that was being assessed, and without question an overemphasis, in my mind, on grades. The students were saying "Why does he have a 61 and I have a 59?" They thought this was very important. So, just moving on from this, the whole culture in Britain is something that is turning out to be an audit culture. And in that particular institution we had colleagues who spent a lot of time trying to precisely define how films would be assessed in great detail and indeed we have in the UK a body called the Quality Assurance Agency and they are very much part of higher education these days. They were established back in 1997 and their aim, as people think, is to measure teaching quality but it isn't. It is actually to enhance confidence in teaching quality. In some way it is a PR process, it is a way for throwing light whether institutions' claims about themselves are true or not. I did try to do some Googling around to find out what the budget of the QAA is; it is a major part of each film school's budget. I know that in 2001 they were running at 140 million pounds a year. It is obviously much more than that right now, what exactly I don't know. I realize there's a colleague who is working in the quality assurance department and I wish to assure him that any comments made in a polemical manner are in no way personally meant. It is an issue I feel rather strongly about but it's rather to ask questions in order to get ahead round this. But having said that, I'll just briefly present a book called "Killing Thinking" by an academic called Mary Evans. It is about 10 years old and it's a very sharp critique of this audit culture in the UK. Something you may wish to read. Also the QAA is responsible for checking whether the students are not terrorists and the like. We have to take registers to make sure they are not terrorists.

Let's move on from that because that's how the situation is. However, of course, I think, if we are talking about education, film education, certainly one of the key things that all of us will sooner or later focus on is the notion of process, no product. For instance, the fact that the finished film, although we love if it is a great film and wins prizes at the CILECT prize and so on, actually the finished film is not the most important element and that is simply because *education is about process not about the result*. It is how you get there; it is about the journey to create the film, and not simply the product of the film itself. And I think all of us will recognize that. As a teacher, I think what really, really interests us is how well have students demonstrated that they can communicate, both orally and while engaging in production of what emerges on the screen. So, there's an intention there, does it actually communicate that intention in filming form, whether it's narrative or documentary. So, the focus is absolutely on the language and the processes that are the fundamentals of creative film practice. And back to the question of the challenge of how to reward failure, how to acknowledge failure as part of the process as that really seem to be something that, as I keep referring to colleagues in the accounting division, is that something that they do I don't know. Briefly, but I am not going to go into great detail. This is the institution I attended as a student back in the early 90s. I can't honestly remember a single grade I received. I suppose I got them. But what I do remember

were the teachers there. Here there are two characters that you may recognize. In fact, I had a very nice email from Colin Young to everybody wishing everyone a successful conference here. And here is Andrzej Mellin from the Łódź Film School. It was the intensive workshops that I attended there that left a really strong mark on me and where I learned rather than the process of being given grades. My focus and interest is on documentaries, this is my field. And I had a quick look on the NFTS website to see how they describe the current documentary programme, an MA in directing documentaries. And I was very pleased to see, actually, rather than a list of learning outcomes, that they simply say that story telling is at the heart of the process. They of course, encourage students to “study in a collaborative film-making environment” which is funny to see the world “collaborative” because Nik Powell complains about that every time. And the last one which I think is really interesting in this whole question of assessment is to develop a personal voice. Isn't that actually the academic aim? I'll leave that as a rhetorical question. In fact, the NFTS describes the documentary course there simply as a “tradition of enabling documentary film makes to find a distinctive voice that both prepares them for the industry, and makes their work a force for changing it”. I think that's a very clear statement without too much jargon.

By way of contrast, the next piece of thought is from the National Film School in Denmark, whose documentary course is highly regarded, that's Arne Bro. There was a retrospective this year at the Zagreb Docs, some of you may have attended. And he wrote a small piece in the programme to Zagreb Docs where he tried to define what it is that they are doing and obviously it is not just talking about the documentary course, it is talking about the film school. This is translated from Danish to a sort of English which I tried to polish up. “The film school is trying to defend the experience of the hand, the eye and the voice itself, doubting the fundamental properties of theory. Yet, trying to develop relevant theory rooms based on experience with the daily language of life and with the continuous work with films produced on professional equipment and the modern industrial conditions. The public might profit from insights into society through a pictorial language which doesn't demand an academic background. Trying to express human experience as in feelings found in a complex and amorphous reality, given order and formed into language by the subjective view of an artist, trying to allow sensations and observations to establish the fundamentals of a language a point, a view.” So, like the NFTS, there's that reference to a point of view, a personal voice seems to be a common aim. “The main term is investigation, the main method is experiment, the main result”, I think that is interesting, “is a pile of attractive faults leading the students to recognize aesthetic laws belonging to tradition, and the subtle law of expression belonging to them. The purpose is to develop subjective and original documentary directors who may not be quite socialized but who are sensuous human beings able to express and perform their personal observations and reflections, motives and strategies, offering fairness and storytelling craftsmanship to the public and hereby enlightened society.”

So, where does that leave us as I need to bring this back to what the session is looking at and it is the question of evaluation criteria of students in art schools? And here I have already some guys with beards, here's another one. This is Mr. Plato who famously argued for the “superiority of the spoken vs. the written word”. He wrote that “the spoken word is written on the soul of the hearer with understanding, whereas the written word is only a pale shadow of the living and animate speech of a man with knowledge”. And that brings me to what hopefully might be a useful area for us to discuss immediately afterwards. It is this whole notion of oral assessment rather than written work. Let us remember that oral assessment was actually the main form of assessment at universities until late 1700s. There's nothing new about it at all. In fact, that still exists in higher education. It is also very much the standard professional practice across many different disciplines; here are just a few such as medicine, engineering, teaching, law and geography. So, this is a way of assessing students that those disciplines feel to be useful and important. It is, of course, perhaps compared to the UK, still widely

found in Europe. And it can take the form of a one-way presentation, like the one I am doing now when somebody is talking. But it can also be, and I think this is the model within film schools, an interrogation, a dialogue, a discussion between the student film makers and the people who are assessing them. There are reasons for really focusing on oral assessment as opposed to written assessment. They obviously mean that a dialogue allows the students' knowledge to be probed, it allows you to go below the surface, and it allows you in the process of dialogue to establish what students really know. It certainly reflects the world of practice. All of us who have completed a film and need to speak to a commissioning editor... that's what you do, you show the final cut to the commissioning editor and you have a discussion. It may not be what you are hoping to hear but you have to engage on that level. So, for those reasons it is argued that oral assessment improves learning. It certainly does suit some students. That doesn't mean to say necessarily it suits everybody. But again the advantage would be that the meaning of questions could be clarified. It is not just a one-way process. If the students don't understand the question, they actually have the choice to say, "Could you repeat that, could you explain that again?" So I think for all these reasons it can lead to a far more fruitful dialogue and as such it has an academic integrity.

There are, however, some issues and some problems with oral assessment. Anxiety, well, yes, I am afraid that is the nature of the business and I think in as much as we are all asking students to pitch and present a project, then if they are anxious in the end, then so be it. That's the nature of our industry certainly. On the serious side, obviously there are people who could have hearing and speech difficulties and that's something that needs to be very seriously acknowledged. If you are dealing with an undergraduate programme, the sheer size, the number of students you are dealing with, makes the whole process rather longer than it would be working on a master's programme. There is always the danger of bias on the part of the assessor, something that we simply need to be aware of. Fairly obviously, if it is a live assessment, and they are not behind a screen, there's the issue of anonymity, we know who they are, but that's also how it is. One very big question, and I discovered this myself, when I started to try and work round these issues when I returned to the UK, is the whole notion of the audit, how do you leave a record. Of course, if you do assess purely in a written form that is a wonderful thing that could be sent to an external examiner to check and to read. However, of course, what you can do is to make a recording of an assessment session, of an evaluation, that would allow an external examiner to listen to that. I was actually told that this was not possible at one institution because it would simply take the external examiner too long. I thought that was ridiculous. If somebody wished to dip in the discussion with the students, then it is up to them how long they take. It should not be determined by the audit process, it should be determined by the evaluation process, that's where quality happens. There is another argument, of course, that oral assessment may privilege people who are very articulate as against people who really know things but I hope we all will find a way round that. So, that is pretty much the end of the discussion. That's not Nenad Puhovski, by the way. That is Socrates. I just wanted to put a picture of him in the end. He taught the students quite a lot. And that's the end of my presentation.

Lubomir Halachev: Thank you, John. This was a very good introduction of our session. I think it raises a lot of questions and I think it gives a lot of opportunities for us to start the conversation. Any questions?

Marianne Persson: I would like to know which kind of assessment do you think is for the future? I have the feeling for myself that this is the oral assessment, coming to be the normal form.

John Burgan: I think for what we do, yes. That seems to be where we should be focusing our energy.

Marianne Persson: But how can we do an audit formally in written form? How do you think we can

condense it to some written form?

John Burgan: When we evaluate students' films we take a whole day doing that, it takes a long time. The way I approach it is the written form at the end as simply a reminder to the student of the key points that we focused on. So, it isn't a full transcript of what we've been talking about as I said that it is very easy to record and have an mp3file if somebody really wishes to examine exactly what Mr Burgan is doing all that time. However, for me having something very simple, here are the key points that we discussed in your assessment and I think any more than that as far as I am concerned is superfluous. However, in the higher education system in the UK they demand rather more of that and you spend a lot of time getting very precise percentages and criteria.

Fredrik Oldsjö: I am interested in the one-way and two-way divisions of the oral assessment. And if you feel that there's actually more than just a presentation or just an interrogation? If there's some kind of a discussion that doesn't necessarily start with you asking a question but maybe them asking the question.

John Burgan: Maybe we should open that to the floor. One thing I am aware of always is that you are not assessing necessarily individuals but in as much the films are made by groups, you have a group of students, usually, standing in front of you, so how you engage with all the members of that group in a useful way is an additional question, I think. So, I will actually throw that back to the floor to see if anybody else has any useful suggestions.

Andreas Gruber: You differentiated between the product and the process. And you said that it was always the process and not the product. So, there is a big difference in our assessments, they are all oral assessments. Always the process, except the last film, the diploma film, where there's only the product because there is no way to discuss the process at the end of the studies.

John Burgan: I should qualify that, of course, it is a question of process and product. We have a strong emphasis on process but inevitably, particularly with graduation films, it has to be both. I was a little too polemical about that point.

Gisli Snaer: You told us and we all know that it takes a lot of time to give feedback. So, how do you structure it and by what criteria do you evaluate you students' documentary films? Is it a very clear structure that you always go through with the same sort of criteria that the students know about in advance, or is it more free-flowing, sort of depending on the nature of the film itself?

John Burgan: In terms of what we do at Newport, of course, this is a regular event; it is not something that happens at the end of the term or the semester. In fact, I think one of the most important things is for students to understand what this process is. Not that it is something special and rather awful that happens at the end of term. That it is a process of having a shared language to understand the way in which we may talk about films in a useful way. Obviously with first year students it is "I like, or I don't like", and of course we need to move beyond that. We don't have a rigid programme that we follow but inevitably there are certain patterns that would always appear. I think it is always interesting fairly early on in the discussion to get a notion of what the students' intentions were with the films. So, that can at least be acknowledged before we go into the knitty-gritty. I think we all pay very precise attention to the film itself. We look at it in terms of film language, in terms of communication. And I endeavour as much as possible to ask questions rather than issue statements. Inevitably, at some point, you will of course be giving some level of judgment. But what I most want to do in that dialogue is to teach them to listen to criticism. To show them that they are not speaking to strangers, they hopefully are speaking to people they know to be fair and

precise in their judgment and I know that certainly all my students value hard but fair criticism. They don't want to be told how well they did a nice film. They really do value a precise breakdown of what the film is communicating, how it communicates, how it works on an emotional level, on a story level. There's not a simple tick box list, recipe, but inevitably we come to the same things of structure, of visual storytelling and so on.

Gerlinde Semper: When we do this assessment or evaluation of a film, apart from doing all the telling about the film, we usually ask the student what the difficulties were, what they are satisfied with, and what they learned, because they always want to take excuses or some of them cannot look inside themselves, so they say that it is because they didn't have enough money, or enough help, or enough time. They should see their learning process because the main question we have during our assessment is "What did you learn?"

John Burgan: Inevitably what I would say at one point would be, "Well, what would you do differently?" That's the question I find myself asking very often.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I would like to remind some of us that were at the 90th anniversary of VGIK at a conference about a very interesting presentation by our colleague Peter Hort from the Westminster University, who is not here today. What struck me was that at Westminster University they pay a lot of attention to peer evaluation. The other thing that was very interesting to me was that they use external evaluation as well, which would not necessarily go into contradiction with internal evaluation. They might even lead to the same result. But I think this is a question that we have to discuss. And I would love to hear the opinions of everybody around the table after John gives us some input on this because I think that not in many schools is peer evaluation actually used. Do we think this is important, how important is it, can we rely on it, to what extent, etc.?

John Burgan: I know of the peer evaluation system and I haven't actually found a way to use it yet. It is not used universally across the borders of the UK but I am interested in how that works. What Peter does say for instance is that the students are far harsher, harder in the marks they give. Perhaps the colleagues here can give some illustration of that thing. So, that's interesting in the first place. I think having an external assessor is vital because invariably, with my students, I know the genesis of the project, I know the pitfalls, I know the whole journey that they took. So, for somebody to see the film, the product, on its own terms, is vital. And I think it raises the bar, it raises the level of the assessment when they know that somebody there, who may be an academic colleague or a colleague from the industry who is seeing the film for the first time and that is important.

One other element that we may also talk about as an assessment element is this whole notion of the reflective journal where students are in some ways mapping the process of creation. There might be colleagues here who use this in a very successful way. It is one of those things that I think sounds great in theory but I am not really sure how it works in practice. And maybe somebody can convince me of its value. I certainly know what the intention is, the idea that the students whilst making the film will be writing down their thoughts in some diary form. I have to say that when I make a film I am so busy making the bloody film that the thought of writing a diary would make me bogus.

Lubomir Halachev: I would like to come back to the very important point of the presentation when John talked about *the process vs. the final result*. This is very important because we always talk about the process and the students think that it is more important to get prizes. So, how do you survive in this difficult situation because we have a lot of problems with this?

Andreas Gruber: It is not an issue of prizes but a question of whether our students get a chance in

the industry. My experience is that we are not so much interested in making assessments as in having a dialogue with students from the beginning to the end of a project. And this kind of dialogue is led by one teacher, external or internal. And we have experienced that it is very difficult to have changes in the process. So, we started with some kind of a programme just to have this type of mentors or tutors for the whole length of the film production. And what I learned was that it was hard to find a kind of language from the very beginning with students so that they can accept what you have to say, whether to be pushier, or friendly, etc. They would like to hear some substantial things about the project but in a language they can accept. For me it was a learning process, it was very, very difficult and it is also very individual how you can talk to students. On the basis of my experience, this is one of the most important things.

Gisli Snaer: What I would like to share with you is that in Singapore we tried the peer evaluation. I think it is a noble idea but very quickly the students tend to use it as a platform for mourning and bitching, excuse my language. What we have found is actually that when they were documenting their journey throughout the semester, this was far more constructive and in the semester there is a dialogue with a panel of lecturers. And that dialogue is actually very constructive both for us to evaluate what we are doing, and for the students. So, basically, I am not a big believer in peer evaluation, it sounds like a great idea but very quickly it dissolves into something completely different.

Michele Bergot: We use peer evaluation also but not for the final films and really for the larger projects. It is used more in the smaller exercises that we do. But I think that using it sets a kind of a scene for a different discussion that happens between the students. So, when we are going into the final films, we'll set up something like two or three days when they are talking about films with each other, away from the school, alone. And I feel like the peer evaluation helps to make a common ground for when they go to talk about these final films. I think that it is quite positive.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: I just wanted to say that we also use peer evaluation but not across the border obviously. The first time we use it successfully is in the second year when the students have just made their first short film. And they discuss the film-making process together with professionals and with all the people that have been involved in the film. So, all the tutors, the sound tutors and the cinematography tutors and the directors and the editors get together and discuss the film. But there's no grade in the end and that's a fundamental difference. When there's a grade in the end, it impedes, in fact the discussion in some senses.

Gerlinde Semper: We tried peer evaluation two years ago for a shorter production and it was very good for the time because the students were going to evaluate the other students. And it became very mature in the eyes of the teachers, because we were doing it in the cinema and they were doing it seriously and not to be harsh or critical, but to show what they have done in a good way, or not in a very good way, and that was very respectful. And we did it once, so we don't know how it will work again but maybe once per generation of students. If they start to talk together and get a common language, then maybe some of the conflicts within the group will disappear, instead of the teachers being involved. I think there is something in the peer evaluation that is good to keep.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I would like to share some views on the peer evaluation because I started this discussion. I think we are all talking about the films but I personally teach screenwriting so I don't care about the film. I care only about the script because for me the process of evaluating my students ends with the script. I don't care what the directors do with the script afterwards. Normally, they make some shit out of the script because we give them wonderful scripts and they make something really bad. But anyway, as to peer evaluation, I have to say that I have been doing this for years,

many years before Peter mentioned that at the VGIK conference. And that's why I had a long discussion with him about this. With the students in scriptwriting, I think it works perfect because, of course, we have a huge discussion about the scripts and then I give them a form with different lines of evaluating the characters and the development of the story and the dialogue, etc., something that every reader in every company does all over the world. And they give their marks, and they do this anonymously. I think that what works for us is that we don't include the peer evaluation in the final grade; I just want it for reference so that they see what other students think about the script. After that in the evaluation committee we discuss it, and maybe we take some points into account, the points that are wrong, or that are not working properly, etc. I personally think that peer evaluation can be very helpful, if we do not include it as a percentage of the final evaluation. Otherwise, I tend to agree with Gisli Snaer that peer evaluation may provoke revenge and some students are very revengeful.

Jan Nâls: Just a comment on peer evaluation and the revenge part of it. I think it is a good exercise with shorter projects in first and second years. You give students the opportunity to evaluate the work of their peers, you give them different roles, I don't know if you are familiar with these games like the "thinking heads", etc. The students may be proposing developments to a given idea. And the students are the ones who are critical, overly positive, etc. You give students the freedom to be somebody else, like a role play. And it is an interesting experiment which has worked, especially with younger students who are careful and maybe too harsh, or too afraid.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: I think there needs to be a distinction made between qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Very often the constraints of the system require us to give a grade. And that's how problems occur. Don't find that there is real lack of generosity, or that they are incapable of giving a proper feedback in a qualitative sense. And by giving someone a grade, they are faced with the same problem that we as professors or tutors have when we want to give an objective grade.

Michael Morgan: Just to continue this train of thought on field evaluation because I found that peer evaluation in our school where we don't actually give grades has proven most effective with other students from different fields and from different groups and casts. I am predominantly the acting teacher so, I evaluate actors on their performances, and often it is very difficult for them to accept what I say as one qualified audience member looking at the result. But what I actually find is that if I pass it over to other students, it forms a collective experience and feedback session for them based on the same criteria of how I would evaluate. It is also very difficult for acting students to view themselves objectively and to look at their own films and performances as if they were a whole. So, it's very important in that case to let other students do that for them otherwise they will be too self-critical, that they do actually need that generosity to actually give them more of an awareness of the sense of a whole in that film.

Lubomir Halachev: As this session is coming to an end, maybe we should also have a few words about the external participants in the evaluation panels and I suggest that we do it in the next panels because this is important to discuss. We'll stop here because of time constraints; we'll cut the session abruptly which is also a good cliff-hanger. Now, we all go for a group photograph in front of the hotel. Thank you.

Panel 2: Student Admission Criteria

Moderator: Marc Nicolas

Marc Nicolas: I am the moderator of this session and on the official paper, the two of us, Marianne and I, are supposed to be speaking but I know that colleagues from “Louis Lumière” and VGIK have also prepared short presentations. Maybe I should ask if someone else would like to make a short presentation on their own process of admission just to calculate what would be the organisation of our schedule in this panel. So are there any other people? No? But of course anybody should have something to say and to participate because in terms of this meeting we are quite few, only 40, I think. The disposition of the room allows us to speak easily and we started to warm up with this session I think and the second one should definitely be an occasion to fix our pace of speaking and discussion. So we are going to try to make a short presentation and leave the discussion on what we would have said before for after the session. And I prefer to give the floor to Marianne now.

Marianne Persson: I start by introducing our website for our new school. That’s the design for the Swedish name and the English name is SADA. Actually it consists of two old schools put together. Dramatiska Institutet is the one that you’ve heard before and that was started in the 70s and the other one is an acting school that has a long history. So this is the new design and you can see the address there and here is the page in English just to show you the departments and programmes. Here is the explanation in English and here are all the 21 disciplines that we started to have admission to this year. Animators, actors, cinematographers, costume designers, documentary film-makers, dramatists, film editors, film directors, film producers, film sound editors, lighting designers, make-up artists, mime artists, performing artists, producers, screenwriters, set designers, sound designers, theatre directors, television producers and theatre technicians. And all of these disciplines have admitted students up to a total amount of 121, which is not a lot. So they take in about four to ten students. The biggest numbers are the actors. And they also have the biggest number of applications. And for these 121 places, 3049 applications came in. This is our first year so we don’t have any experience to build on. I just gave you the figures and the statistics. And the biggest number of applications came in, of course, for the 10 places of the actors – 1400. And out of those 1400 they tried to see all of them for a couple of minutes. But this is also the first time that we got all the applications online which means that some of them drop out more easily with online applications. So for the 1400... Fredrik, you said there were 800 coming in. So that’s a big percentage that didn’t turn up for the first little interview. But some others are a little bit more serious. The second group having the most applications is of course, film directing. And there were 243 candidates competing for the four places. And that is also a long process of testing the applicants because they are such a small group so it’s very important that the group itself is possible to work with. And then we have radio, radio is very popular and has a very good education because you do it on your own, you create your own programmes, and it’s based on a lot of writing and talking and not heavy technical equipment that we have in film-making and also theatre.

So what I’m going to talk to you about is my discipline - film production. So I will show you the requirements for admission that are general for all the students. As a lot of people would like to come to us, the high Swedish language competence, written and spoken, is mandatory. And we’ve had actually a lot of Germans that learn Swedish. They come over the years for the summer and they learn Swedish and they then study mainly for editing and sound. Completed secondary school education, and that means that they have English and math. General working experience in the field that you are trying to get into. They don’t come straight from school. They are at least around 20 years of age; and documented experience of creative work within the field. The education is free of charge for citizens within the European Union, the European Economic Area and Switzerland. And

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just a couple of years ago, I think it was last year, that we started to take fees from international students. We used to have a lot of students from China. Now it's getting a little harder. So citizens of other countries have to pay an application fee of 900 Swedish crowns and also to pay the full cost.

Now I will explain how I select my students. I have four steps. I had 66 applications this year for 6 places. The application process takes about 6 months – from the day they hand in their application, somewhere between November and January, then they have their answer in May. So the first step is to send in a good letter and fill in the application online and in time and also the thing that is most important to me and to our little committee, we are usually a very small committee – it's me, a student (some of the students that are in the school now) and somebody external from the business. We read all the applications separately and we choose half of them that we want to invite to an interview. If anyone is interested to take in someone for an interview, we let all interesting persons come in. The second thing that they put into this application is an idea for a film and they give creative ideas or creative solutions and they also explain why they have chosen this project. But I attach the greatest value to the letter they write about themselves, the biographical letter and how they came up to the decision to apply to the school. So there I can read the story of their life, how they've come to this decision. Usually it's very useful to keep this in mind. We discover a lot of things together in the committee. We have the same taste or the same reactions to the letters and we have no problem to choose the first 50% to get into step 2. That's when we have the interviews over a week and then we have like 35 to 40 minutes and as I noticed for the first time because of this online application, suddenly people didn't come to the interviews. Or they call and say "Can I Skype with you?" So that's the modern way. We let them Skype for the interview. I take a picture of each person that we interview because at the end of the week when you've met all these people, you forget the faces, you forget who it was, and you mix the feelings you had. And even if you write a lot of things in your book, by the end it's just the person that was in the room that you remember. So the pictures at the end are very useful to really recognise who was that, who you talk about because the little group of people that we are, we have a tendency to forget the ones that we met the first day and just remembering the ones that came in last. So the pictures are really important. And from this group of 35 I pick half of them, around 16 or 18 and then I have my really important test and that's a couple of weeks later and is a test where I find out all the things that I like, that I find it necessary for somebody who wants to be a film producer or study film production. I want to see if they can read, write, understand English and express themselves correctly. It's a written test connected with a film screening. They all come together. The candidates see each other; it's 18 candidates coming to the cinema. They see the start of the film. This year it was the "Last Emperor". They see the beginning in the cinema. I found a text to this film in a book about Bertolucci and Jeremy Thomas – about a couple of pages in English, very interesting and then I asked a lot of questions about the film industry, film directors, Swedish film laws and politics and so on. After this test I can see if they really have the big interest in films that they say they have at the interview, if it's really valuable and they can prove it. The comprehension in English is also important. For me they must love films. If they don't, they can go to banking or whatever. So it shows if they love films, if they know a lot about this field, if they have a passion for some special genre. As long as they really show love and interest. Usually I can see if the candidates can go further or not. They can prove to be not good enough but the surprises of the good ones – the ones that are good, they are good all over, all through the four steps. And then, step 4, they have to wait quite a long time because they do it together with the candidates from film directing, film script, film cinematography, sound and editing. And that's when we have like 8 candidates from each discipline. We put them into 8 teams and during three days they are doing a little film together and all of us, teachers, are around the teams and check how they work, and how the other candidates are working and we also evaluate the films. It's a hard job for two weeks because there are films that start every day and ones that are finishing or so. It's a very intricate system of organisation. After that we have discussion about the whole group, how it will look when

we choose our candidates. And again I take photos of each team. It was so important at the end that we had these pictures because we had the films, we could look at them, and we could talk about the directors, the producers and the other candidates from the other groups. It's hard to decide. If you have four candidates, it's very easy to find the first 3. Then you always have doubts on the fourth. Is it this one or this one? And then you get help from your colleagues when they say: "Oh, but I noticed that this one was very good at the shooting or this one was very evasive, etc." You take in the opinions of your colleagues but you *do* decide yourself. Sometimes they are very critical but then you know that the candidate that you want is very good. So after a few days and during the weekend we decide on the Monday and send out the decisions and we give the list of our choice to our Dean. It takes a couple of days and then they get all their answers. Because we have applications every second year only, it's so exclusive and so small groups that when everything is over, I call everyone. I call first the ones that don't come in and talk to them and tell them what they can do if they want to apply next time. And then I have the pleasure of calling the ones that are admitted. So that's it.

Marc Nicolas: Your process is very rich and complex. I think that many of us are in such a position. I suggest that we have all four presentations and discuss all of them together even if it is different departments; different schools because probably the discussions should focus on what kind of exams, what kind of criteria we use, and probably it could be the same in different departments and schools. I could speak for an hour if I had to explain our admission process. We have on our website – which is not a very good one, like the one of our Swedish colleague, but it will be redesigned this year—we have a complete report about our exams and admission process, which is 30 pages or something like that. We make it public for the future candidates. So I will only give you some guidelines to give you a general frame of what it is.

I'd say that we have very few students in each department of our school – usually between four and 6. And today we have 10 departments, meaning that we have 50 students a year. Every year there are 50 new students in 10 departments. The number of candidates is usually 1100-1200 in the beginning. One third of them are for the directing department and then the rest of the candidates are distributed almost equally even if the script writing department is the second one. The second thing I must say by way of introduction is that we don't have any permanent teachers in FEMIS, which is a big problem as you can imagine in everyday life and especially during the admission process. We have to organise a group of people, to make them work for us and try to keep the same criteria from one year to another. In fact I'm not really telling you the truth but I think we don't have any permanent teachers because we have heads of departments who are not permanent because they work actively in their professional fields and they usually stay for some years in the school and they get used to it. The heads of departments give the direction of the studies and what is taught in FEMIS. Most of these people are quite prominent in the film industry in France. But we have to organise a big group of people for the examination and admission process. So this means that the first problem is to try to create a community with all these people. More than 100 people are needed for the whole admission process working as examiners for the different exams. So one of the big tasks is to organise this small community, to make them share the same criteria, the same view on the candidates. To achieve this we do two things: first, we change only 1/3 of them every year – that means we have continuity from one year to another with 2/3 of the people who are the same. And usually we keep them 5 years. The second thing: we organise a lot of meetings – before the exams and afterwards to discuss the grades.

Let's move on now to the process itself. Like in Sweden, it takes six months. It begins at the end of January and finishes in July. We have three levels of exams. The first one is the same for all candidates, whatever the departments are and whatever the department where they want to make their studies in FEMIS is. And this first level is made of two different exams that are mandatory for all

the 1200 people. One consists in the course of 6 weeks to write at home a paper of about 15 pages, which we call inquiry. I can't find the exact English word for that. In French we say "Dossier d'enquête" (a sort of inquiry). They have 6 weeks to do that, 15 pages and we give them three themes. They have to choose one. These three themes are very general. For instance last year the three words were "window", the second was "never" and the third was "episode". And they have to write 15 pages after this word, making an inquiry about it. It must not be a fiction. It must be related to something existing, meaning that they've been meeting people; they have been observing something in society or around themselves or even within themselves, in their mind. It could be very different – it could be an essay, it could be a documentary. It's not really meant to be a future film but something that deals with a problem. And as you can see we choose these words, these themes to be quite open. A window could be a window, a real window but it could also be a window on something, a mental window or something. And this exam leads to the second one and the second one is very different. It takes place in a hall, 1200 candidates are in the same hall. It's the biggest amphitheatre in the University of Paris. We screen a 5-minute piece of a film and they have to write 6 pages within three hours. Of course, we change the film every year and we try to make it impossible to guess what the film could be. So we use documentary, fiction, recent films, very old films, classical films, almost unknown films. But we choose these 5 minutes in order to allow all these people, who want to study in such different specialties, to write a paper which could be rich enough, about what they have seen. So this examination is not about their film culture in the sense that we don't ask them to prove that they know the filmography of the director or that they have knowledge of film history. We want them to describe what they've seen and try to explain how cinema works in these 5 minutes. Of course, it's film culture, it's mainly film culture but I think you understand what I mean when I say it's not about knowing film history, like in books. These two exams give two marks. In fact each of them has two examiners to be sure that the interpretation of the paper is made correctly. And if the marks given by the two examiners differ by more than 0.5 points, there is a third one to determine what the exact value of the paper is. And we do that for the two exams. That means that we have 5000 marks. Then we make a big sifting and we eliminate 80% of the candidates with these two exams. And then there is a second level for the 250 people left which is very different. It depends on the department where they want to study. That means that each department prepares two exams – one written and one oral. And these two exams are, let's say, more professional, concentrating on the subject of the department. Let me give you two examples, not for the 10 because it will be too long. Let's take the example of the directing department. The written exam is to write a synopsis in four hours and also a scene. The candidates are given three very short stories in two two sentences and they have to invent a script and to write the synopsis in four hours. The second exam is oral and in fact it's practical. We invite them to come into a room where we give them a camera, two actors, two pages of a script and they have to direct the scene. There are two examiners looking at them – how they organise the shooting, how they direct the actors, how they interpret the scene, what kind of ideas of mise-en-scène they could have. The day after, the film that was made, the short film, which is not a film in fact, is looked at by two other examiners and they concentrate on the result, not on the process of directing the scene but on the result. And the candidate can express himself about the result. This is an example of the directing department. For production it's different. One example is giving them a short story again and we ask them to try to define what sort of film it could be, what sort of budget, what kind of casting, what could the style be, who could be the directors, the actors. Actually to try to imagine the project of the film. And the second one is quite different. It's about producing, line producing. We give them a short film script and they have to express themselves of what the organisation of the shooting could be, the making of the film, where it should be shot, what the budget could be, how many people should work on that, etc. So this second level exists for all the departments, with these two exams – one oral and one written – it brings to a third level because we eliminate among the 250 candidates. We finally keep 80. And these 80 people are invited to an interview with a jury of seven people. They spent around

40 minutes discussing why they are here. So if I try to conclude, there are three levels that try to test different qualities of the candidates. The first one is mainly the capability of expression with the written inquiry, how open they are to the world around themselves, their creativity or their capability to invent something with one word – the “window”, “never” or “episode”. The second one, the film analysis, is about film culture and the ability to understand how cinema works, what is the global *mise-en-scène* of a short piece of a film. The second part, which is made of the two exams, has more to do with the competence about the subject in which they want to train in the school and their creativity, awareness of what the job is exactly of being a DOP or a producer or sound engineer. And the third part, which is an interview with the final jury, is more about why they are here, it also uses like in the Swedish case, an autobiographical letter that would have been written at the very beginning of the process; and also trying to test the engagement in cinema in the future and to be sure, if other exams have not established it yet, that they don't only love cinema, they don't only want to live in the cinema, among cinema people, but they also want to *make* cinema, which is a final criteria. So this is what I could rapidly describe from our examining and admission process.

We try to create a community of more than 100 people, to share the criteria, to have a lot of meetings with them; then we have different exams because we want to test different competencies or qualities of the candidates and through the double correction and all these exams, you can see that it's 5 or 6 in the end for each candidate, we try to be sure that we are not making mistakes choosing them. There were instances when the different juries who eliminate the candidates have very long meetings to really focus on the people who have the same grades, the same marks. For instance, somebody at the first level who had a 15 mark at the first exam and 10 at the second one, is it better or not than the one that had a 10 and 15 at the second exam. So we have to discuss with the examiner, they could express themselves in front of the others to say what is this candidate, what they think he/she could be in the future. So this is a rather exhausting process, as you can imagine, but we find that we need to have such sophistication, again not to be sure that we take the best because we know perfectly that probably the 50 following the 51st, are very good candidates, but to be sure that the one that we take has something to do with making films in the future, whatever the position they want to occupy in the film industry. Well, I will finish there. Maybe if you have questions I could give some more explanation. And again we have this complete report, which is unfortunately in French. But in the future, in our new website, which is going to be open I hope in June, there will be an English version of everything, including the report on the admission process of the year and you could learn everything on every subject of every department.

So now I give the microphone to Michele Bergot and then to VGIK and then we try to mix all these elements and the questions.

Michele Bergot: I have a presentation that slightly exceeds the time that I think I should spend so I'm going to make it as short as possible. Can you, please, interrupt if there is something you don't understand or I've gone too quickly of whatever. So the school I come from is ENS Louis Lumière and we have three departments of equal weight - cinematography, photography and sound engineering. It's run under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. This point is important because it's state funded which means that it's open to all nationalities and students come to the school virtually for nothing i.e. they pay Euro300€ a year. The school only runs courses at master's level. So now we have 3-year courses, the first year which is roughly speaking equivalent to a Bachelors and the second, afterwards you have two years of Master's. A small percentage of our students can do PhDs. We also take foreign nationals as long as they can satisfy the basic criteria. There are no prerequisites in terms of study, field of study because we are trying to be as eclectic as possible and to have people from all different backgrounds if possible. The approximate number of candidates last year: so for film we had approximately 300, photography – 100, sound engineering –

200. We only admit a maximum of 16 per year. How do they prepare for the entrance exam? They need to have basic proficiency in English in intermediate level, knowledge of their chosen field, knowledge of art in general, basic scientific and technical knowledge and an awareness of the exam structure. They can buy pass papers. Having said that, pass papers are not sold with the answers. So they know what the exam structure is but they don't necessarily know what the answers are. OK, the first procedure is quite long. They get notification in February. The first phase, which is a series of multiple choice questionnaires, is in March; the second phase is composed of two written tests and that's in April, and then you have three oral examinations, each of which are 30 minutes long; they take place in May, they get their results at the end of May. The first part of the first phase is the English test. You have a general grammar, vocabulary and expression or multiple choices, of course, error identification and then you have three lengthy texts. So they have 40 questions to do in 30 minutes. It's a true/false questionnaire. The second part – you have three multiple choice questionnaires; the first one is general knowledge, sciences. Basically they talk of it as basic scientific and technical knowledge but in fact it is really quite complex for somebody who has literature background. Here you have a picture – this is the second multiple choice questionnaire. So the engraving demonstrates the presentation of the kinetograph, Edison's kinetograph. You have four questions, all of which can be true or false. You get one point for each correct answer. And the last part is what they call artistic and film culture but in fact this one is just information so the questions revolve around where different pictures can be found – in the Louvre or Musée d'Orsay. This test is being revised because we've reached a conclusion that there's not much point in testing this kind of knowledge. All the multiple choice questionnaires are corrected by computer. The results are sent, then there is an examination panel and then the overall grade is calculated. Approximately 80 candidates go on to the second phase. I'm only going to talk about the film cinematography department because it would be too long to talk about the other departments too. The second phase is the written tests. The first one is storyboarding so I'll just show you what they have to do. They have to choose one of three subjects, using eight of the images provided here. So here you have eight and here you have the second lot. So they have to provide technical details, to talk about the position of camera, the movement of the camera and all the technical details necessary, including afterwards how they are going to edit the pictures that they've chosen and the sound design and how they are going to make a film using these images. The second part of the written test is film analysis. Last year they had an extract from this film which I'm not going to have time to show you. It's the break-up scene, if you know the film, which is towards the end. So they have to analyse, they have a 5-minute segment and then they analyse the director's choices, which should bring out their knowledge of cohesion and how a film works basically, how the choices that the director makes have an effect on the spectator. The essay doesn't exceed five pages because we have a very short time in which to correct them; it's corrected by two examiners, the examiners that set the tests and they have to reach agreement on grades, on who passes. There are three interviews which is the final phase. The first one is artistic attitude; the interview also contains a practical exercise. The second interview has quite a lot on. The students have to bring their own bibliography. They talk around the kind of books that they've read, the kind of knowledge that they have; they defend in fact their bibliography. This is extremely important, they talk about how the course fits in their professional future, how they see themselves when they finish the school. This is reasonably important. This is a cinematography course and we still get people who are writer-directors and they should really be going somewhere else. But in fact, you know, two or three out of 16 per year still come to us and do the cinematography course. The final interview is a practical exercise. Last year they had an actor, and they had to do the camera work, to frame, to light and to produce a kind of mini-narrative around this character. That's it. At the end, we hope we've chosen the best candidates but we know that some of them will escape us. What I think I have to say is that in some departments, in one department in particular, we have people that don't stay the three years, they leave after the first year, for example. But in the film department, this very rarely happens. Thank you.

Tatiana Tursunova: The time-proved practice of selection and assessment of the applications to VGIK has a long history. It includes both discovering applicants' creative abilities and testing their cultural level. And it has been actually elaborated by the founders of our film school such as Sergei Eisenstein himself, Pudovkin and others. VGIK is based on the system of workshops headed by a master. Enrolment requirements are aimed at revealing the candidate's creative ability complying with the chosen profession and qualification, their physical and psychological condition as well as estimating their cultural level necessary for effective training in art. In VGIK we have seven faculties and of course I'm not going to go through all of them. We'll talk a little bit about film directing department. And some of what has been said earlier by Marc relates to our VGIK system as well. The creative trial comprises of five or four rounds. And at each round the applicants are offered assignments which help uncover their creative potential to the fullest extent to determine their natural disposition to the chosen profession. To be enrolled at film directing department, applicants should present the following works: autobiography; it should not be more than five pages, it's a preliminary work and usually it starts like a month before exams. The whole process takes place over two months. We start accepting the papers in the beginning of June. The entrance exam (separate ones for each department) is in July. Also in the preliminary work, they have to show their idea for a film, a general interpretation of a short story based on Russian classics such as Chekhov, Tolstoy and others and the element of its possible screen version. The dramatic conflict, description of the character, location, environment, etc. – no more than three pages. Creative trials in the film directing department are held in several rounds: round 1 is a session of the works presented by the admission office, which is separate; the system is pass/no pass. Round 2 is performing a creative assignment which allows the applicants to display their visual thinking, observation, imagination and help discover their individuality; recite a fragment of prose, a poem or fable; all three are obligatory. A colloquium aimed at determining the applicant's level of culture, his/her knowledge of literature, music, film art, fine arts, drama, television, history and philosophy. The assessment is a 100 grade; the lowest passing grade for this exam is 41. Round 3 – written task on one of the offered themes – an essay based on life observation, etc. The allowed time for this exam is six hours. It's also a 100-grade system and the lowest passing grade is 41. Round 4 is a creative assignment and interviews aimed at revealing the applicant's creative potential to the fullest extent. It's usually in front of a committee of five people headed by either a chair of a department or the dean of the department. Of course the master himself and two or three teachers from the department. I'll just give you some numbers. This year, in the feature film departments we had 443 applications and the total number of the admitted is 20. The number in the documentary department was lower – 95 this year and 150 the previous year; among them – 8 foreign students and the total number of the enrolled students was 16. For the cameramen we had 154 applicants, four of them foreigners and by the way all foreigners are required to speak Russian. If they don't speak Russian, they are welcome to take our Russian preparatory classes which are not only in Russian language but an introduction to film study as well. Students from eastern countries, like China, have some difficulties to learn and sometimes they take a second year. As for screenwriters - 110 (7 foreigners); the exam was passed by 18. The cinematography department is a little bit more complicated because of the nature of the profession itself. The applicant for the cinematographer department should present the following set of photos: portrait, still-life, and landscape, general photos demonstrating the applicant's composition skills, their observation, and the ability to choose the lighting conditions. An important part of this is the set of general photos which demonstrate the applicant's proficiency and his skill and method of rendering the events. Round 2 is taking photographs; it's a 100-grade system again; the passing grade is also 41. The shooting takes place at the University laboratory with applicants' own small film camera. The shooting includes two shots of a still-life; one portrait; two shots of general pictures on location; two thematic documentary reports. Round 3 – basics of photography; 100-grading system; the lowest passing grade is 41. Oral exam on the basic knowledge of photography as an art, four

minutes – technological process. History of photography - the main stages of photography, including digital photography, the dates of the most important events. And practical photography; basic photography genres. In covering the theme, the applicants need to speak about the peculiarities of photography, about the problems that a photographer has to deal with; to describe the equipment, materials and techniques to be used in making this kind of photography; the specific aspects of digital photography; demonstration of the knowledge of photographic objects; photographic materials, basic photo chemistry, etc. Lighting engineering, exposure metering, etc. Round 4 is colloquium. The colloquium is held by an examination board with each applicant individually. It includes the following subjects: the artistic technology analysis of the photos presented at Round 1 and 2; in explaining the concept of work analysis, the applicants must justify the choice of position and its lighting as well as to reproduce the set arrangement and lighting scheme; themes connected with the history of culture, photography and cinema. Scriptwriting - Round 1 assessment of work presented to the admission office evaluated in the absence of the applicant based on the pass/no pass system. The aim of this trial is to discover talented persons with potential, capable of learning screenwriting, editing and other literary skills of fiction, documentary, educational films and television. Round 2 is a literary sketch on a proposed theme; assessment is based on the same 100-grade system; lowest passing is 41. The applicants have a choice of 4-5 themes. The allotted time is 6 hours. The required volume is 5 handwritten pages. The aim of this round is to reveal the applicants' dramaturgical capability, their literary and aesthetic view point, knowledge and understanding of the actual process and facts; analytical ability and imaginative generalization. Round 3 – a written assignment on the viewed film; completion of a written assignment offered by the examination board and it's a 4-hour exam; 5 written pages mandatory. And the last one is a colloquium which is always the most difficult task for everybody because you don't know what to expect during the colloquium and what kind of question you can be asked. This colloquium is also held by the examination board with each applicant individually and includes analysis of the work presented at Round 1 and written in Rounds 2 and 3. The colloquium is aimed at revealing the applicant's cultural level, knowledge of cinema art and modern social life. There is something I'd like to add. We've noticed at VGIK that at present, to our deepest regret, the applicants' cultural level is declining compared to the situation two and three years ago and this is the task all our professors are facing – when the actual applicants are admitted, to give them a list of mandatory reading. I don't know what the situation is in other schools but this is our observation with regards to this problem. Generally speaking and regardless of the competition (and there are many new schools in Russia), VGIK is still our main school. We have a summer school which is aimed at foreign students; we usually put an ad in January. The students make a documentary in a certain location in Russia. They come from different countries. It's a very good experience for our students; all the directors are usually foreigners. And like this year, we had many foreign students: from India, Colombia, Israel; we had a series of master classes. This is not exactly related to the theme I was talking about. One of them was from La Femis and it was very beneficial for our students in terms of raising their cultural level. Our website is in Russian. As my colleague from Sweden said, they have mandatory requirements but I'm working on it and part of it is English so the foreign students who would like to come can have an easy access and understand the admission process. The rules and regulations of the admission process are already available in English. Of course we are always there to answer any questions the applicants might have.

Marc Nicolas: OK. Thank you. I think we can now start the discussion. Maybe the first question I'd like to raise is: what is the respective priority we give to personal qualities such as cultural level, artistic culture, experience in life before school and all that type of things. And on the other hand, how do we evaluate technical competencies related to cinema.

Andreas Gruber: The main thing is what our main criteria are for the people. We had long

discussions and decided that it's not the cultural knowledge; it's the techniques of visual perception, visual storytelling so the idea is to find out if they have any idea of visual perception and so all our exercises have to do with the application more or less of exercises for visual perception. Like they have to send 15 minutes of documentary stuff and they have to watch people in action. The first exercise when they are coming is to describe exactly what they filmed because there is a huge difference between what they filmed, what they did in the footage and what they can really see. So this is one of the main criteria for us. We have about 190 applicants for fiction film directing. We try to have very demanding exercises so that we can be sure that the number of applicants is not growing. The idea of making it very demanding is to stop the process for people who are not willing to engage too hard. So the idea is to have 180-190 people who are really willing to work. So these are the two main criteria: to be sure that we get people who are willing to engage and the other is that the applicants should have an idea of visual perception.

Marc Nicolas: Is there anyone else who could say in a few words "this is my aim in my admission process". Michele?

Michele Bergot: I would like to make a point about the way we test people's cultural knowledge or general knowledge. I think that our students are being tested by people who are 30 years older than them, who have different references. Perhaps if we moved on to new technologies, if we looked the world through their eyes, we might find a different way of testing that might raise their cultural level. Sorry, I just wanted to say that.

Marianne Persson: Our main requirements are enthusiasm; and they should have visions beside any other criteria. That's the main point.

Mieke Bernink: Language is not such an important issue. And being able to voice your thoughts on paper is something that the Dutch cannot demand. Also I don't think we've got the money for a 100 people to help pin the assessment procedure. But one thing that's important for the bachelor level at the Film Academy in Holland is whether people are also teachable or whether they already have sort of such fixed ideas that basically you are not actually adding as a school, as a learning institution to what they do. I think we also go for the visual understanding, the affinity with storytelling and much less with the intellectual abilities generally because a lot of them are dyslectic. So why ask them write. They now ask for different sorts of input, not just written or something but also websites or other sorts of digital communication. That's really it.

Marianne Persson: I'm happy that you said all these things because it's the same for us in Sweden. I think that what's important for us is storytelling and to be able to work in teams. To collaborate is a very important test with the last step that we have.

Marc Nicolas: Do you have in your schools, like in Sweden, this organisation of groups? It's a very special exam. Does it exist elsewhere?

Gerlinde Semper: Yes. We are just 5 departments. And they are deciding together.

Marc Nicolas: Does this mean that you also organise your future candidates to work together? I mean, do you compose your future class?

Marianne Persson: We don't but it's very good if they keep together after school because that's the privilege they have, that they know each other. You want the school to function over the three years, you want to have affinities between the different students. Anything can happen and destroy it while

they are in school. There are no guarantees when you take them in.

Marc Nicolas: Is there a sort of standardized preparation for the admission processes of our schools? What we've heard concerning Sweden, probably also VGIK and FEMIS, is that we don't have classes preparing for this type of exams. It's only by passing the exams themselves that you get trained to it. In my school for instance it means that two-thirds of the people are admitted after the second or third time. The first time probably is a round of observation and understanding what the school is demanding. Are there any other schools in which there is a sort of classes preparing for the exams?

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Actually we have such a programme in our school and there are two types of programmes – we have a one-year programme, which is 6 hours a week where they can go and learn the basics, the fundamentals of directing, or camera, or photography, or animation, etc. Most of the people that go through this programme apply to the school and are admitted. There is another type of programme which we only do in the summer; twice during that period – once in July and once in August. A very intensive 1-week course where they are familiarised with the exact nature of the examination process. We go through the whole examination process with all the candidates and we give them examples of the tests that we use; we give them examples of the practical exercises that we give at the examination tests. And we even make some kind of interviews with them so we can prepare them a little for the final interview with the examination panel. I will use the chance to say a few more words.

Listening to the presentations I was trying to do a basic list of all the criteria that we use in the schools and I came up to seven different things. So I would like to share these with you. One of them is literacy and basic knowledge of culture and film. So candidates that cannot write properly or cannot say a few things about culture as a whole, contemporary culture, they do not pass obviously. Then, the second thing mentioned was originality of ideas - this is probably one of the most important things. And then, the third thing is the ability of the candidate to respond quickly to the challenges you give them during the examination period. Then Mieke mentioned something as "teachability". I would divide this into two. First, the ability to work within given tasks and within given conditions because most of them will work after the school in a situation where they will be having specific requirements and tasks. And if the candidates are not able to do this in the very beginning, they will never learn this. Because if their personality is not "teachable", if we can put it that way, they cannot be taught afterwards. The second part of this is of course the ability to listen to feedback and to absorb the positive feedback and to be able to defend their own ideas against the negative feedback. So this is something that I would understand under the term "teachability". And these are number four and five on my list. Number six – everybody talked about the team building, the team spirit, the possibility for collaboration. And finally, something no one mentioned but I think is of extreme importance – a positive oriented personality of the candidate. The candidate should be able to see the positive elements of life and should have the willingness to reach a reflective positive catharsis with his or her creative product. So I think these are basic criteria. If I am missing something, please, add what I've missed.

Elena Rusinova: I would like to say that we have such programmes at VGIK which are meant for people who intend to apply to the University. The idea is to prepare them, to give them a vision, an understanding of these, as we call them, artistic exams. Concerning sound department, we have five exams, which are very similar to some of your schools. I don't want to repeat this; we had a special session for this. Anyway, the idea of the University is to offer an opportunity to our students to find their professional comrades, their crew within five years of studies, of practicing together. We've never made casting for the crew in the beginning of the process. They have special tasks, they produce films from the second year up to the last one. And usually they change. So the director

sometimes finds his sound director very early on; they continue working together; others search all the time; they are not satisfied even at the end of the studies. So I'd like to add just a couple of things. Unfortunately, not only our professors are able to make a system or selection criteria. We are under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. And sometimes they speak a different language from us. So if you ask my professors, what are the criteria of admission, what the marking system should be, they would say "We would like not to use marks; just pass or not". But the Ministry of Education has set very firm criteria, which gives us trouble when the exams begin. There are of course subjective parts of the exams, which are the oral interview and the analysis of the film; and there are also some technical exams; sort of physics and basics of equipment and so on and so forth, in which it is very easy to see what is the mark for such work.

Lubomir Halachev: Well, what I want to say is that over the last years (maybe 10-15 years) we've faced another danger that I've shared with John this morning and he's agreed with me. Fourteen years ago it was impossible for an applying student to have some kind of information or knowledge about the technology of making films. Nowadays everybody can come and say "I have my films, I can shoot, I can edit, I can do everything". So my question to such people is "Well, what do you want from me?". Maybe they don't have such a profound and deep cultural background as we had when we were students but they have a lot of information which is very different from our information. But it is very difficult to distinguish between the information they got from the internet and the information and knowledge they should have in order to be good professionals. But the problems exist, I think.

Andreas Gruber: A commercial company started offering quite expensive courses for application programme and we discussed if we should offer some kind of courses. It was a very good discussion and at the end we decided "No" because the more interesting result is to see how people are acting and reacting unprepared. Not having learnt something in preparation. We want them to come to us unprepared in a way and act and react in their own intuition, in their own emotions and intellectual abilities. So we don't offer any kind of preparation courses.

Margot Ricard: In our school we ask for a 3-minute film. Sometimes the people come with very high marks from the school before they get here after the college and they have some preparation in cinema or TV or multimedia. But they have to submit the 3-minute film. We receive 300 applications in cinema and television and we invite 60% to come for an interview. And the interview is very important for us. We make some crews based on that – who can make sounds, who can make directing, artistic directing and all those things. But I'm surprised nobody mentioned asking the student to apply with a short film. We don't have any complicated exam because we have a demographic situation, we are a small country and if we do that so complicated, there won't be anybody in the classroom. But with the film we can see a lot of things that have to do with self-expression. Sometimes it's not very well done but you can see some fresh things – an idea or a vision and we find it very interesting.

Bruno Gamulin: Change of perspective – the point of view of the students/applicants. Our entrance exams are extremely demanding, exhausting and very expensive. Very few can reach La FEMIS and other good schools. And very often the professor breaks basic human rights. Because the final decision is purely arbitrary. Regarding criteria – it's purely arbitrary, final decision, last call. And that's a moral responsibility. And that's the reason we are teachers. Very often we break basic human rights, asking too much and being too demanding, non-transparent. That is not acceptable – to be non-transparent. I myself ask very strange things at the entrance exams and I break the human rights. And I'm not proud of this.

Marc Nicolas: That's a really big question. Transparency will be a special chapter because I would be very interested in your answers to that. Was your process transparent to the candidates themselves, to those who failed and to the future candidates? The only response that we had is that all the marks that were given through our process are commented on by the examiners in 10 lines and these 10 lines can be read by the people who failed. The people who enter the school never know their marks because we don't want them to compare themselves. All the rest can ask us about the marks and the comments, to understand what it was, which is not very sophisticated but we try to be transparent. The second thing is that all the oral exams are public. That means that you can come and assist, unless you are a candidate, of course.

At the end of the day, all these admission criteria collected, you face one decision – if the applicant is talented or talented enough to study at the school. But no constitution in Europe recognises the term “talent”. You can try to solve this problem by dividing the decision among many people. When you set up a jury of 7 – 8 people, you have to make them discuss that as we are discussing now. It's a strong discussion. So this limits the opportunity for breaking of human rights.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Bruno, I'm 180 degrees in opposition to what you say. We do not teach talent. We do not measure talent. We teach technology. We teach how the student can do this or cannot do that. We cannot teach him talent, we cannot measure the talent. I would like to remind you again of the word that Mieke mentioned: teachability. Because this is what we are doing. Yes, “teachability” is a major criteria. Can you teach that person? Because what Lubo said is true – many times the applicants coming to the examination session have made several films. They say: “This is my film”. And what do you teach him? When you say we are breaking human rights, I'm not sure this is true because we are not breaking any rights. I mean, this person comes voluntarily to us. He comes voluntarily to be taught by us. And if he wants to be taught the way we teach, he is welcome. If he doesn't want to be in our school, let him go to another school. Let him teach himself. I don't care. But these are the rules in this school and he has to listen to the rules, obey them and do all the exercises and this is the way. The same applies to admission. This is the way we admit people in our school. I'm not breaking anybody's rights.

Marc Nicolas: Yes, but I'm afraid Stan, that it's a little bit more complex. I suppose that most of you ask themselves the same question. Should the candidates adapt to the school or the school adapt to the students? And all this is the balance that we all experience. It is not totally this way but it's not totally that way either. We experienced that in the past. If we take a student who is a perfect maverick, very, very different from all the others - this could be a temptation. Of course we have to serve the whole country and all kind of people. And specifically the most bizarre people, weird people because they could be very creative. But when he/she is at the school, he lives apart, never mixes with the others. That has to do with the question before. Do you select the students together? And of course you don't have to do that because if you do it, you are really formalising exactly what is your school, what the students must be and the film they are going to make must be. So this is the permanent balance between both. So I think the positions of both of you are equally relevant.

We have to stop because we are already late and I would like to ask one final question that we could discuss during lunch, of course. Do you take into account the question of social discrimination in your admission process? I mean do you have quotas? Do you have special preparations for those candidates that you think are socially disadvantaged to pass the admission process? Do you have such cases? I know it depends on national culture, of course. But what about this topic around the table? Quotas, positive discrimination and all sorts of things...

Bruno Gamulin: I don't think I have the best applicant, the best students. I'm not sure. Because I am

maybe too demanding sometimes or too expensive and I lose the best possible students. And that's tragic, you know.

Marc Nicolas: Do you do anything against this fear and this problem?

Bruno Gamulin: Yes, I try to do my best. To dedicate all my time, all my mental abilities to the students. It's not easy.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: The question that Marc put was to everyone. Do you have in your schools such programmes for people with dysfunctional families or disabilities or from minorities or whoever who are not able to really pass the exam. Do you try to do something in this direction?

Marc Nicolas: In FEMIS we created four years ago a summer programme for people with this kind of profile and we select them through unique criteria which is the scholarship that they could have from the government if their family has not enough money. And for these people we organise several weeks of, not training for our admission process, but to be within the school to share the language, notions, ideas that probably they have never heard in their families. And to make these people think Yes, I'm going to pass the exam and to win. We created this four years ago. It is starting to work because the first year we had one person from this programme coming to our school, the second two and this year – 3. So we experienced that something can work, giving these candidates some advantages that they didn't have before in their private life. And we are now working on a special FEMIS for people who don't have the criteria for the inscription. I forgot to say that for FEMIS people must have been studying two years before in the University or anywhere else. And most of them have completed a three or four year programme before. But we are going to prepare a special programme for people who don't have even baccalaureate, which is the end of secondary school, but maybe could make films. So it's a huge challenge for us to try to define what could be the selection process in that case because it couldn't be through a university grades, ECTS and that sort of things. We need to think of something different.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I know we are late already but just some final words. There are at least three schools that I know that have such programmes. Unfortunately, none of them are represented here. But I want to give you the examples. One of them is a school from Benin and I hope that the friend from Benin will arrive at some point. This school actually sends professors to the most distant parts of the country and they make some kind of a casting for future students. And they give special scholarships. And this is a private school. They give special scholarships to the students that come from very impoverished families and from parts where they don't even have television or they don't even know what a film is. They take these students from these distant parts. The other example which I can give you is the Tel Aviv University where they have special programmes for the Palestinian students because in Palestine there are no film schools. So they go and do projects together with future applicants and they show these projects at the Tel Aviv Festival. This year's project was called "Water"; last year's was called "Coffee" and on this theme they use Palestinian applicants who want to be film makers to work together with students from the school. And they show the results. They also go to the Palestinian territories and have special workshops. And the third example is from our neighbour Turkey and we have a school which is not represented, the Istanbul Cultural University. They go to Anatolia, which is as you might now quite far away from Istanbul and from Ankara and they go and make 3-week sessions where they do special exercises, shoot a film with people that might never become students but some of them might do so. And if these people want to become students, they then admit them in the school based on the work that they had done in the workshops. So I thought that this might be interesting for you to know.

Marc Nicolas: We haven't finished the discussion on this subject but we have to respect our schedule and stop now. We can continue of course during lunch. Thank you everybody and especially to our speakers.

Panel 3: Screenwriters' Coursework Assessment Criteria

Moderator: Stanislav Semerdjiev

Stanislav Semerdjiev: OK. The second half of the day starts after the wine and the lunch. This is always a big challenge, especially when we have to talk about screenwriting which is a theme that "everybody knows everything about". Our friend Jan Nâls will be the first one to start.

Jan Nâls: Thank you Stan. I'm going to offer you some personal experiences and some talking points and also some questions to the floor. I don't actually agree with Stan. I think that the more you know about screenwriting, the less you know. So I think that's the question part. Anyway, my first experience that I would like to share with you came in a workshop with a theatre company from the UK which was in Finland. In Finland we are known to be very negative people. We are always very critical of everything. And when I assess student or other scripts we always take the negative, we always take what is wrong and we focus on that. And these guys from England, they offered the opposite approach. They said that when they work with scripts, they only talk about the positive things. And their thinking is that when you talk about the positive things, the writers, who are smart people, know intuitively, instinctively that the bad things will wither and die. And this is, I would say again, the complete opposite of how we do it in Finland in films and in general I would argue. So my question is should we be positive and only positive in our assessment and only talk about the strong points in a work?

My second question is "Is the criteria we use for script assessment wrong?" This goes back to Aristotle and those other gurus that we all adhere to but I read a PhD by a Finnish doctor called Saara Cantell and her point of view was that what film teachers teach all over the world is wrong. Because they do short films but everything they teach is taken from a feature film paradigm. And in her PhD she talks about the short film as a structure that might be a joke or a poem or something else. And it's just an interesting thought to me that, because I recognize myself in her description of how you were brought up with feature films and then you come to a film school and start working with the short formats which sometimes are very short like just 5 min. and sometimes it's 10 or 15 minutes. So, I don't know. I'd be interested to hear your thoughts on this. How do you deal with this, how do you approach the short format which a lot of us work on with our students.

My third question goes back to what John was talking about the process or... the product. I would like to add a third category which is the individual experience, the individual journey if you like of the one person being in a process and as we gather from the morning session we often focus on the product and I do as well and we often forget about the individual experience and the process. So what I did in another context, I read some studies on creativity and for example this is just a proposition of another set of criteria that it would be good to apply to a written script. Criteria that focus more on the creative process rather than the script. Usually I would assess a script based on structure and character and dialogue and so forth. But what happens if we apply this kind of criteria? For example, we look at the process and assess ability to see problems and challenges that no one else can see; the ability to produce original ideas, ability to produce these ideas with ease. Also assessing flexibility, the ability to change one's direction and one's preconceived ideas. The ability to elaborate, to create something meaningful and big from something very small. And maybe the ability to organise these ideas to some sort of coherent whole. So in my mind if you sort of tell a student this is the criteria we are looking for, they may produce a different kind of material. I don't know. But I just feel that our sort of emphasis on structure or story-telling techniques and character guide the students in one direction. So it's just some thoughts, could this be a way forward in looking at the process in depth and bringing that to the fore.

Then another case study that I found interesting. I worked with AFDA in South Africa who hosted the CILECT conference this year. So what they do, and I find this very interesting, and I don't know if anybody in Europe does the same, they actually have an audience to assess students' work. What they do is that they have a film and they demand of the producer and whole crew to identify their target audience. For example, they have a target audience of teenagers aged between 13 and 17 and they are looking at a female target audience. Then the producer invites an audience of that very target audience and they have an auditorium full of teenage girls, from 13 to 17 years old, and then they give a set of criteria to the audience and then the audience marks the actual product not the teachers and not an external panel of experts. What they do often is that they combine the two; they also have a panel of experts and/or a panel of teachers' staff. I found this quite a novel idea and quite provocative even, to have an audience to actually give the marks to students. So these were some of my questions and some things I picked up along the way when I sort of dealt with script assessments. I might add that I'm also myself coming from a script-writer's background so I've also been on the other side of the table and found myself getting a lot of assessment that I thought was really bad so it's a really interesting topic and I think you could talk endlessly about this but yes, and now I give the word to Stan and may be you continue from your point of view.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Well, I think these are very interesting questions. Thank you, Jan. Someone had a question "What do you mean by negative and positive approach"?

Jan Nâls: No, I was talking about the process when you assess a certain work, say a script, I find that the usual approach is that you pick up on something that is weak, something that is wrong and may be the structure is weak and one character is uninteresting or something like that and then you pick up on that. That's the starting point of your assessment of somebody's work and then the other approach which I find much rarer is when you focus only on the positive side of things that you say that this character is very strong and that's your starting point of an assessment. Or that this is, you know, it can be a detail or a character or something in the structure or the whole idea that you find appealing and strong. I'm just offering this as a sort of another approach when you deal with students, because I find as I said in the Finnish culture of this giving feedback and assessing things is always focusing on the negative side, what is not good, it's just, that what I meant.

Bodo Knapheide: My first presence at a GEECT Conference was in Ljubljana, I think 10 or 12 years ago, something like that and Mogens Rukov from Denmark did a very short presentation. And I remembered that later, many times. He said: "When I approach a student, the first thing I say, what Stan referred to, is what I like in the script or the subject; second, what I don't like, and third, what I don't understand". And from there the dialogue starts. So it was very simple but I always remembered that. Maybe because, like I said, it was a very short presentation and I think we were all waiting for Rukov to speak and he was there, took the microphone, and he was there for 5 minutes and he left but something stayed with me still.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Aha, this was his typical way of shocking the audience. So, any answers to this question or to the other questions? How to teach the short format? Do we really teach the long format all the time and we only pretend that this is a short format? What about the audience assessment? Do we need a target audience? I'm just reminding you the questions that Jan raised?

Bert Beyens: I think many schools have made a distinction between going for a short film as a product and then of course falling back on what you've named there – like is it a joke or a poem or things like that, very typical. So you can do that in the short, I think that most of us try to have another approach too and work with students more scene-oriented and develop a scene or sequence

but you have a wider context for that subject or that thing you do because at the end of the day it also has to do with the money that you can spend with students in producing work because if you all have a lot of money we would have, I think, feature-length films more often than it's now. So it's a matter of budgets too. But I think that in order to prepare for more interesting feature-length work you fall back on the notion of the scene and there is nothing wrong with that. That's the only thing I can come up with as an answer to your question.

Jan Nåls: So the answer is that it's not wrong, that we are actually doing the right thing. What you are saying is that the same rules apply or that you've adapted them.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I will ask you another question. Is a small child a man or a woman? How do you treat the child? Do you treat him as a man or a child? Do you treat her as a woman or as a child?

Jan Nåls: I would say a child.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: What is the difference between a child and a man?

Jan Nåls: Well, there are a lot of differences I would say.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Except the sexual difference, of course. Except that he cannot reproduce himself. I am asking this because I was working on a script several years ago about the year 1000 and I found out that our idea of children is completely useless compared to the idea of children the people had in the Middle Ages. Because in the Middle Ages they were treating children as normal people. They were giving them the same type of work, they were giving them the same type of food, they were giving them the opportunity to be part of the community, they were, may be not voting, but they were present everywhere. And now we have created some kind of a ghetto for children – a golden ghetto but it's still a ghetto, a cage. We say "No, no. This is a child, he should not do this, she should not eat this. So now I am referring back to the films. A small film? How different is a small film from a long film?

Mariane Persson: A short a film has fewer characters than the feature film of the same story. Do you remember "Bekas"? It's been made into a feature film now that is opening in a couple of weeks. We thought that he would make the story what would happen after they left. But it's the same story – extended. I don't know. I haven't seen it yet. But I heard that it was very good. So all the details that you have in a long feature film, can be present in the short film as well.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I don't think this is a distinction – to have fewer characters or lots of characters because you have a film called "Hell in the Pacific" and you have two characters for 100 minutes. And it's a beautiful film. And it keeps your attention all the time. The suspense is wonderful. So it doesn't matter if it's a 5-minute or 100-minute film with two characters.

Lubomir Halachev: The problem is that all the time we talk to our students, not screenwriters only but also directors, producers, etc. about the feature film. We prepare them for long feature films but what they practically do is short films. And you know that very often there are students, at least in my experience, who are very successful with the short films, win a lot of international prizes and never make good feature films. When we teach our students how to make films we teach them on the basis of their short films, it's a very good way to teach them but if we want to teach them how to make feature long films, I think it's a wrong way. These are two different "animals" in my opinion.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Well, actually I think it's time to start my presentation now because it fits very well in here. The first year of screenwriting in our school, what I teach is the fundamentals of screenwriting. I don't really make a big difference between a short film or fiction film or even documentary or whatever because for me the fundamentals are the characters, the plot and the dialogue. This is what I teach. How you create characters – no matter if they are characters in a short story or in a long story. How you create a believable plot, a plausible plot, how you create a dialogue that is both informative and economical and homogeneous and characteristic... And I give examples from completely different films – from 5-minute long films, from TV series, from fiction films and from documentaries.

Now let me give you an idea about the screenwriting teaching in our school. The students in screenwriting actually go through every possible aspect of dramatic writing because in the first year they study fundamentals but then in the second year they study documentary film writing, TV series and serials writing, they study classic theatre playwriting and puppet theatre playwriting. In the third year they study fiction film, they study TV programmes and different types of shows, they study animation film writing, they study modern theatre forms and they study classical musical, opera, ballet writing. And then in the fourth year they also study interactive media writing. So through the four years they cover everything possible in the field of writing. When they leave the school they are able to write a play, a musical, an animation film, a computer game. Last year a student graduated with a computer game. This computer game is now produced, it sells very well, and this guy is making a lot of money. At the same time I have a girl who graduated with a musical which is going into theatre. Beside these subjects they all have to study mythology and religion – they study it throughout the four years. They also study psychology from the first year till the last year. And they study acting which is obligatory in the first year. Acting is very important. But I don't want them to be actors. I just want them to see how their words sound on stage. And then we go to the diploma work in the fourth year and what we do is we give them a chance to decide who could be their tutor because in all these years they have completely different tutors. I myself am teaching only two of these disciplines: fundamentals and film writing. I have 1two different professors in the programme. So the students meet 1two different views on writing throughout the whole course of education. At the end they can choose whoever they want to be their tutor for the diploma work.

Now what are the criteria that we use to evaluate their work? And these do not change throughout the years, no matter whether they write for the opera or they write for a documentary film. The first criterion that we always use is if they can work within the framework of the task. We have given them a task and the task can be that they have to work with 5 locations only, with three characters only, no dialogue. OK, this is a simple task for the first year. But then they can have another task which could be the transposition of a Greek myth and they have to follow the Greek myth in a completely new contemporary version and to preserve the conflict, the characters, to preserve the development of the story and of course to change the environment, the motivation of the characters, etc. so in any of these cases, no matter what the task is, the first thing we judge is – do they really follow the task; do they really have all the characters from the myth, have they really completed the functions of the characters, do they follow the conflict the way they have to do it. If not, even though it may be a very interesting piece of work, it doesn't work for us. I mean for our team of professors because this is something that the students do on their own but this is not something that we asked them to do and tomorrow they will become screenwriters in the television and they will have to write series or tomorrow as screenwriters they will be invited to write for a producer or an animation director. So 99%of the time they will be working under specific requirements and will have to respect these requirements.

The second thing is, we always do this as a group. There is almost no individual work with the screenwriters. The individual works comes only after the second year when we have individual meetings and we give them feedback but the feedback in the first and second year goes with the group all the time. We read every piece they have written and we discuss it. Everyone has to say their opinion, give positive and negative feedback. So a criterion again is how well they can absorb the feedback and how well they use this feedback in the next edition of their work. Did they make the changes or not? And if they made the changes what was the result of this? Was it a positive result or not? Did they understand what we suggested? So they have to give feedback to us why they used it or not used it and what was the result.

Then the third thing we always judge – when it is a team work – did they work in the team because for example, in the second year they have to do a serial bible and they have specific personal tasks in teams of three or four or five or even more people working on this bible. So everybody has his task to do. Did they do their task or did they try to steal somebody else's task. Because it happens very often when one works in the professional life and is given the task to write dialogues but one doesn't want to write dialogues and then starts talking to the producer about changes in the plot or you are the person invited to write the plot but you write dialogues instead of the plot, etc.

And here comes my major question which I would like to present to your attention. Where does the professor stop with his input? This is a creative work, a very creative work. Where does the professor stop? When we discuss the scene, do I develop the scene together with the student to the extent he/she is happy with, and I'm happy with, and the other students are happy with? Or do I leave him to do it by himself and he comes five times back to me and I say "No, this doesn't work, this doesn't work" but I don't tell him how it can work. And this is a very important problem because at the end of the day when the film is made or when the script is made and everybody is happy, who takes credit for this? Is it the student or the student and the professor or is it basically the professor who completely changed the student's idea, the development and finally the dialogue. And I think this is the core problem of teaching screenwriting. Because at one point you have to find the balance where to stop. And you have to make sure that the student gets as much as possible from you but you don't impose yourself onto the student. You don't make this script your script. It has to be the student's script after all because otherwise he will lose confidence and he will start relying on you all the time. He will start asking you for advice every time and this is not good because he is not developing his personality, his own voice, he is not developing his self-confidence. Yes? There is a question?

Margot Ricard: Stan, I sometimes work on a scenario with a TV student and I always have this problem. Sometimes they block on the idea. I would like to have some tips. This question is really very relevant because when they block how far do you go to give them the impulse to cope with the situation because even in school we have some production schedule and we have to find a solution of the scenario, to film it the coming week or the week after. Do you have any tips?

Stanislav Semerdjiev: My personal tips would be the following: I have had students blocking all the time, I mean every student, even the best student has had this experience. The first thing is, I start working with associations, I don't go for solving his problem directly, I start giving him examples from similar films or from similar students' work that we discussed the year before and I say "Do you remember what John did in this particular case" or something like that. He says "Yes, I remember but how does this relate", and I say "Well, think a little more", and if he doesn't find the relation, then I say "OK, let me tell you what John Boorman did in "Excalibur" or what FF Coppola did in "Apocalypse Now". "Oh, yes, I remember this." But how is this related? So one day you probably run out of options because you have given him all the possible associations and then you just say "You know what, I would suggest that you do this but this is my idea and I strongly advise you not to use it. I give

you my personal solution but, please, don't use it because this is not *your* solution. You have to find *your* solution. This is my tip.

Margot Ricard: But many times the block is more affective because in Montreal, sometimes students don't have enough confidence. Sometimes they are afraid of their own creative impulse. Something like that, you know. Can we discuss that?

Jan Nâls: I think what we are saying now about the on-going assessment feedback based on what you could, should, might do next, I think in a way, is what I would like to think as the inspiring and not dictating approach because creation is not going to come if it's forced. It might be that you say to them "How would it be if it was just one character?" rather than "I think you should make them into one character!" Because if it's not inspiring feedback, I don't think that it would trigger anything creative there.

Gisli Snaer: I believe this is always a question of what sort of learning environment you are trying to create. Whether you promote failure because often learning by making mistakes is far more valuable... But in terms of addressing the positive things, well, there is the simple technique of the sandwich where you go positive-negative-positive. The question is if you are an instructor, a supervisor or a mentor. And I am of the opinion that traditionally a film is being mentored. The Socratic approach where you guide the students to solving the problem themselves with simple questions: "What happens if you do this?" etc. to me works best. I'm not a big believer that we solve it out for them. Then it doesn't stick because that's the problem – we teach something and it doesn't stick. And it can only stick when the failure is spectacular because then they remember. So again, it's the learning environment, what sort of learning environment you are trying to create. In our school we promote taking risks in a spectacular way. This is also dictated by the fact that it's in Asia where culturally it's not good to lose face and make mistakes, so literally it takes a year to unlearn them. We have to re-educate them. They come from a very strict educational system where they don't even pose questions because they are afraid they might pose the wrong question that I want to hear.

Margot Ricard: We are in a very small society and we always take the risk, just in the industry. We do TV with nothing. It's why the students are very creative, they try things but once they block, it's very emotive. Sometimes if the failure is too spectacular you can block them for a long time and I try to avoid that because you have to manage just where you can fail and it's pedagogical and it can be very tough to recover from this failure. I can understand that in your culture it's completely different. I have met Asian people and they are very strict, they have to succeed.

Gisli Snaer: Actually the whole thing is about the process of creativity and it's the brain's ability to imagine, conceptualize and then realize. So the part of it is, of course, to understand where in the process is the student. I am of the opinion that if there is a block, it doesn't exist; it just means you don't know what you are writing about. So let's go back – was it in the imagination stage. Probably not because that's part of the soul, the premise, the foundation. So it's perhaps in the process of conceptualization which is also actually related to the context. I think, we need to understand a little bit better what creativity is because we are tasked with teaching it or rather nurturing it. Take a mundane act of life and make it interesting. And we call it talent. I fundamentally agree with Stan – that's the only thing we cannot teach. We can nurture it but you can't teach talent.

Jan Nâls: If there is a block, maybe it is good to verbalize it - it's also good to go back to research, to get out to the world and feed the creativity with outside impulses. If you are writing about a hospital, live in a hospital, you know, it's like a tip to you. I think that always works with my students. They come back richer; they come with a new experience that gets translated in their work.

Gisli Snaer: My experience is something I take from La FEMIS where we had screenwriting class with Jean-Claude Carrière and I remember after my first two weeks I was in absolute awe how great a teacher he was. And then all of a sudden I realized he didn't actually tell me anything. He only asked me questions. So I was solving my own problems. I have great faith in Socratic questioning. Ask specific questions that get the student to solve the problem themselves. And in an environment where there is nothing wrong with trying it's not going to be judged what is being said because again we all know that is part of the creative process; it's the ping-pong. Throw as many bad ideas out so that eventually a good idea will come up –whatever the good idea is; that's of course, according to the context.

Marc Nicolas: I would say that I think it's right to try to solve it by questions but if you are in a more affirmative thing, as Margot suggests, I think that one of the tricks, like in the other educational fields, is that in the collective situation before this blocking you permanently explain the categories of blocking. That means that when one day a student experiences this sort of blocking, he knows that it looks like something that is meant to happen, not necessarily to him, not now but happen to other people in other situations, in other scripts. This is exactly what Stan said – it means that during these classes of scriptwriting you are not only concentrating on the scripts but more generally speaking you are trying to build categories, even if these categories change but to make people recognize that they are in something that looks like something that was spoken about some two years ago or one year ago and it helps them to represent themselves as being blocked.

Bert Beyens: I think also that it's very important for the students' confidence. The thing that you often hear young people say now – all our teachers tell us that everything has been done so it's very difficult to come up with something new. The thing is that we should tell our students that 500, 400 years ago, during Renaissance or Shakespeare's time people thought that there was nothing new. Mythology is a good thing for that and Biblical stories, too. Stan, you teach them right. It's all there. There is nothing new. But I want to ask a question to the group here – what about peer assessment, how do you get the other students involved in interacting? Because I think that's also part of the thing in classes. So how do you go about the other students?

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: This is not so much about peer assessment; this is a response to your questions, Stan. It's not an answer to your question about how much to give as input because I don't think there is an easy answer to this question. And I can feel myself processing everything that has been said here at the table so what I wanted to say was I could imagine that when a student comes to a school in the beginning, it's very valuable for them to receive input and to receive ideas and possibilities of how they could change their work. I could imagine that, you know, it's the job of the educators over the years to really watch the process of these students, to leave them alone. Part of the job of educating them is to really watch and see, like you know, that it's a slow process that way. But listening to what you were saying about questioning, questioning, questioning, that is also true. So I'm kind of sitting here going "well, both are absolutely valid" and that's why I think there is no real answer to that question.

Gerlinde Semper: Talking about women directing students, we had one who's finished this year; in the beginning of the third year came in after the summer vacation and said I'm going to quit. She was just staring to make her graduation film. We all said well, do. We could put in somebody else, professional director on your film. OK, she was not confident; there was an alternative for the school so we wouldn't miss her. So then next thing she was open to was to re-write the script. She re-wrote the script that she had been writing and developed with a woman scriptwriter and she re-wrote that script in two days and came in with the script and wanted to have her directing teachers for a very

intimate meeting: also with her producer. And they were talking and talking and talking and the changes weren't that big, it was that she had to conquer the story; it had to be her story. And I was talking to the producer after that meeting and she said, "It seems that Maria (her name was Maria) just doesn't understand what we are telling her. It doesn't click. It was like the block was really intellectual. And after a while she did the film. Everything was very hard to get started and everything was at the last second. All the stretches of time were used and she was the last one to edit and everything. Over this last year she was challenging everybody round her and I can tell you she hated everyone, spoke bad about everyone. But by the end we said well, that's Maria. And now she is very happy. There was no fuss, if she had stopped or quit the school we would have taken somebody else but that's not what she wanted. She wanted to be exclusive, the only one.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Now that we started talking about writer's block we are spending too much time on this, actually what we have to talk about is criteria of how we evaluate our students' writings. One thing that I forgot to mention in our programme is very important. We don't let our directors direct their own scripts. Our directors are obliged to work with screenwriters. In some cases, it may be that the screenwriters are the sole screenwriters. In other cases this may be a collective effort between the screenwriter students and the directing students but in no case or on vary rare occasions do we allow the directors to shoot their own scripts. And this is something that our school is proud of because finally, after so many years, we managed to teach these people who call themselves directors from the very first second, to finally understand that they have to work with screenwriters and that this is to the benefit of the film. So evaluating the work of the screenwriters, one very important part is how a screenwriter collaborates with the director. And every exercise we have in the school where the screenwriters and directors collaborate is evaluated together with the other screenwriting exercises of that student. Because in the end of the year, the average grade that he gets is a mixture of these. I'm not only interested in how good a writer he is but I'm also very interested in how good a collaborating writer he is. Because he will work with directors all the time unless he decides to be a director himself. This is something that just came to my mind. So any other criteria for evaluation of screenwriting work? Besides the work with the director in a team or the work in accordance with the set requirements, the set task or the feedback that he gives for other people's work, etc. what other things come to your mind? Do you use other criteria?

Jan Nâls: It's again as I said, it's more about underlining and emphasizing for the student that it's about the process so that if you talk about that then you naturally talk about stuff that came before the actual script was finished, so then you don't look at a character or is the character complex or not; you look at other stuff and then it's more about that individual person's experience; maybe use a reflective journal or some other sort of interrogation that you find out about that process and what we sometimes do is that we sort of have meetings where we only talk about the process. Then we obviously also have feedback like we all do. It's an alternative, it's another way of thinking and showing the students that you've gone through is actually very valuable; it's fine that execution time is coming and there is a lot of anxiety and it's fine but it's good to offer another window to look at that.

Mieke Bernink: But what kind of underlying learning process do you support for them to be independent, organizing their own motor of inspiration after they finish the school because otherwise they'll want your help forever?

Lubomir Halachev: I think because we talk a lot about the writers' block and in my opinion the profession of the scriptwriter, the profession of the film director and the profession of the film producer, which I'll talk about tomorrow, these are professions which are very much linked to decision taking. If you cannot take decisions, then you have to consider choosing another profession,

this is not your profession. You may be a very talented person, you can write poetry, anything else, but screenwriting, directing, the profession of the film producer are professions which are closely related to decision taking.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Excellent. I agree that this should be an important part of the assessment criteria. Your own ability to formulate your goal, to follow your goal and to take the right decisions, or the wrong ones should be a major criterion.

Jan Nâls: Does anybody have comments on the audience thing? Does anybody do it in Europe?

Bert Beyens: When a couple of years back I did a workshop with first-year students (I had 75 students), for a writing workshop that's a lot. These students would then later go for all the film programmes, or documentary or writing or television. So 75 students, not all with the ambition of writing, but this was in the programme and I had to do workshops. I divided them in three big groups of 25 and within the 25 group I would make smaller groups of 8 to 9. When I had a morning or an afternoon of four hours I would start with 30 minutes with the whole group, then they would go into the smaller groups for the next three hours. So I would work with the 25 in the beginning, go to the next group for an hour and the next. My aim was first of all to reduce cost because they were obliged to copy for their own group the material and give it for the next sessions. For a group of 8 to 9 you can copy that, it's not a big cost, it's not big work, it's also not an enormous reading you have to do and you can focus on 8 synopses. Audience for me was students first. The peer assessment is what's happening there. In the beginning they are a bit like orphans, you go to the next group and they are waiting for the teacher to come. After three sessions what I found out was that there was a big responsibility; they are on their own, they are very free and they want to engage with each other; they are very committed to that process. So you are not always there and you are still there. Of course this was happening in a big space so I could go there and move around. In the beginning they are very polite. When you screen a short film they would all applaud each other's work. Only later they would become critical. When there is trust and confidence, they start asking questions and they take the questions of their friends in class much more seriously than my questions, of an old man. What do I know? When they start asking questions about a subject, about a character, it's really much more relevant. So the audience is there.

Marc Nicolas: In the same direction, we don't have exactly this but six years ago we invented something for the diploma scripts. We invented something which is to have them read aloud by themselves and actors. And it's a great moment for them because it's like a public presentation and also they have to work on it with the actors. And it's a sort of comprehension of their own work that is different. And now we have decided we are going to do that for the second and third-year scripts, to have a reading in public aloud and the audience would not be exactly the peers, not only the other scriptwriters but all the students and maybe other people. It creates a new process of working on the script. And of course the actors bring something very simple which is related to dialogues and actors can say a lot about dialogues, of course. So maybe it's half of an answer to your question.

Gisli Snaer: Can I just ask are the films already made or is it just the scripts?

Marc Nicolas: It's the feature script and it's a part of it – 10 minutes.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Well, I would like to answer that question. And I tend to completely agree with what Bert says because the audience is there. I absolutely don't believe in some amorphous audience coming from the street because they don't even know how to read a script, they don't know how to understand a script. What kind of evaluation they would make? They don't know what to say, they

don't know how to evaluate these scripts. So the audience is there and these are the fellow students. In our case, when the directors and screenwriters work together, this is a huge group of 15-20 people which is the audience because half of them are directors, half of them are screenwriters. They discuss every project and then another thing that we have is called the "pitching sessions". We gather 10-12 professors, from all the different branches like sound, camera and film criticism, and editing, and animation and of course directing and screenwriting, producing etc. so the students, the director and the screenwriter team comes to pitch the project and they hear the audience, which is their professors' audience and this is the audience because these are people that don't teach them in person; these are people that read their script for the first time. This is the best audience they can have because this is a professional audience and at the same time this is a very distant audience. So this is my idea of the audience assessment.

Margot Ricard: But it is different when you do children programmes, the audience and the age of the audience is fundamental; because you have to take in mind if you write for very young children or for adolescents; it's critical and completely different. I think for a filmmaker you have to keep your freedom. But for us, that teach TV and TV for children especially, our work is more industrial and in this way we must have in mind this question of the audience.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I completely agree with this. We also have a special module on children screenwriting; the students study psychology, the different age groups, etc. we have never used particular audience of children for scripts because I don't even have an idea how to do this. Maybe we should just talk to the children and explain to them what the idea is, I don't know. It can work with films but with scripts, I don't see how it works. But because we are coming to the end of our session, I just want to put on the table one last question which is related to something I would call competitive approach. We've never discussed this before. And we don't have representatives of the US schools here but many years ago when I was at UCLA, doing a part of my scholarship there, there was a thing that I saw and then I've seen it many times in different American schools. They have everybody taught equally but there is a competition at the end and only three or five scripts get made. And this is a kind of an evaluation criterion, too - when you have 50 students and a committee decides which five scripts will get produced. And then there is another criterion - all the other students have to find a job on the projects. So everybody has to fight to be a cameraman, an assistant DP or an editor of this project because his project is not going to be made anyway, which I think is a very interesting way of evaluation. So I would like to have our last five minutes for your opinions on this because this is a criterion we didn't touch at all. Obviously in our schools this doesn't happen much but it happens in American schools.

Mieke Bernink: In Amsterdam that is exactly what we discuss at present - that this might be an option to have a competition and not so much because of the necessity or belief in competition but because there is a demand also from students for more flexibility in the way they graduate. I mean, not everybody wants to make a 20/25-minute long feature or documentary. That's not right for everybody. There is a demand out there in the world for much more diversity. Why should the school still have the old fashioned way of making a film, etc.? So we are presently thinking about how we can do that. We work with the sort of Dublin descriptors and qualifications and stuff. So we start from what are the final qualifications for each of the sub-disciplines and what different ways are there for graduating, given that these are the qualifications that you've got to reach but it would be an interesting discussion because it's a "holy cow". All the students, they just say: "But I'm entitled to my final year's film". Even though it's a disaster, it's no good; we put a lot of coaching in, which sometimes means the old question of when do you stop. For us it's a question when do you stop coaching a project and why do you keep on coaching a project. Is that because you are afraid also for the good name of the school or your personal image if the end projects aren't any good? I mean

there's always our own investment in the projects that we allow. So it would be a very interesting discussion to see if we could diversify the projects that people use to graduate. But no conclusions have been made yet.

Christine Ghazarian: Well, I want to talk about the programme I am in charge of at La FEMIS. We do this with screenwriters. We produce our short films together with ARTE, we decide on a theme and then we call the students to write short scripts on that particular theme. These are students from the screenwriting departments and it's not a part of their curriculum programme. So they write scripts on this particular subject and then the producers of these films decide which ones they are going to produce. We interface with ARTE and with the team of directors, managers of the programme but it's the students actually, the producing students who decide which films they want to produce. Then they decide on which directors they are going to choose for the films to be produced and directed. And the trio producer-director-screenwriter work together to make this film happen. So this is something that the screenwriting students like to do because it's a different way of writing, and directing students – because this is not what they do at La FEMIS. Most of the time it's their stories that they produce and in this case it's a story of a screenwriter chosen by a producer that they are going to be directing.

Gisli Snaer: Well, this is what we do in Singapore: it's almost like a film school within a film school. It's a small portfolio project, which is run by three lecturers. All students get the chance to make short films with a crew of four people or something like that. Then we have what I'd like to call programme-led films that the students make at the end of the year. All students can come in front of a panel of lecturers. Very often you will find probably a cinematographer who has no interest in writing who has a brilliant little concept and we will sell like that and then we will basically start with the producers. The programme used to be all very directors-led. That led to a complete disaster so we tend to put it in the hands of a producer and they would start to look for a writer and that literally starts to form the crew or the trio of writer-director-producer. So far there haven't been any victims; it enhances the idea that a writer needs to be assigned to all projects and they have to work with a director.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Gisli Snaer is the moderator of the next session about directors. Therefore, we will very naturally continue after the short break. So, thank you all for this very interesting panel. I hope the questions that we raised will stay in the air and we'll continue discussing them.

Panel 4: Directors' Coursework Assessment Criteria

Moderator: Gisli Snaer

Gisli Snaer: So it's odd but when it comes to your own specialization you tend to have less of an opinion. It's always easier to have opinion of others. And my own specialization is directing and of course it's a topic very dear to me because I find it rather complicated and we have been through several processes in Singapore how do we assess it, how do we go from the subjective opinion into the some sort of validated grading that has some sort of evidence of critical thinking, etc. I think with the directing it's the same question that we are obviously carrying from this morning, if it is about the process or if it is about the product but before we come to that Michael and Sophie from the European Film College are going to share with us how assessment is done there.

Sophie Harper: Okay, I thought I'd start by giving you a bit of context for our school because it's quite different to many of your schools in a lot of ways. We have just a one-year programme and it's a foundation course so our students are accepted not into a specific field but into the programme in general and then they can do short courses, we give them a chance to try as many different fields as they like really and to start to discover what it is that they love. I think probably most of them think that they're fiction directors when they come and many of them discover along the way that they are not which is a great success that cuts down the numbers applying to your schools later on. So it's an eight and a half-month programme, we have 115 students, 8 full-time teachers and no grades. It's a residential programme - that means we all live together on the campus, the teachers and the students, and it's international. We teach in English and the students come from about 25 different countries, half of them are Danish and the other half come from Northern Europe and all around the world really.

So just to touch on something that was brought up by Stan this morning - positive discrimination in the application process. We accept them on the basis of a letter basically which hopefully shows some passion and some desire or some love of film and interest in learning and openness. The ages of our students are between about 19 and 35 and they come from really different backgrounds. Some of them already have master's degrees in film theory or some of them are recent school leavers or some have been working in some completely unrelated field, they've been a chef for 10 years or whatever which makes for a pretty interesting student body. So I'd say our positive discrimination in terms of accepting applicants is that we really strive to encourage this diversity in the student body so that we have an even split of gender. Because we are all living together that somehow helps to it, too.

We have 8 teachers from 5 countries. I think and our ages range from about 30 to about 70 and I think that this means that we have really diverse references culturally and in terms of film history and experience. All of that hopefully leads to a school that allows people to start to develop their own voice and discover whether film is for them. So I think in the beginning we are sometimes managing egos, big egos and very fragile egos and trying to nurture fragility and level things out so that those who come from a very low studying point and those who come from having quite a lot of experience come to terms with each other. We do this by having 3-week courses that we repeat - directing fiction, directing documentary and an acting course which Michael will tell you about later. So the same students might choose to take all three of those courses, for example and within the courses we have, the way that we evaluate is, I guess, engagement in course discussions, technical exercises, practical exercises and exercises in interviewing and learning the language of cinema. So there is a big sort of collaborative course exercises between all of the fields with the exception of documentary, for the fiction all of the students work together to make a 90-second film every three

weeks and they are put together in crews so the people in the acting course act and the people in the producing course produce, we have a bit of rebels off on the site. We work with the editing and sound departments but other than that everyone does their own thing and they are also working on 90-second films where the assessment and evaluation goes all the way through very closely working with about 15 students in this class. Each one of them directs one of these films.

They start with the concept we develop together, they write a treatment, they pitch to their peers, we constantly discuss and form the films and then they go out and shoot, then we evaluate the product and the process and then they end up by producing a marketing package so the idea here is that they need to be able to be self-sustaining. If you want to be a documentary film maker you need to understand how all those elements fit together. Then in between these 3-week courses we have production periods where the students get progressively more advanced as we go along and the duration of the films increases but the production periods are the same, the students submit proposals for films and we work with them to tutor those proposals' development further and once they've had a few weeks of development then there is a selection of the projects.

I can talk about the documentary project which is coming up just before Christmas, I anticipate that there will be about 40 projects submitted and we will select between 15 and 18 of them to go into production and the selection will be based on the strength of the idea, the do-ability, the creative approach, the strength of the story-telling, whether they are coming with an answer or with a question and also the diversity. We want to have a really diverse range of projects made during each production period to represent the diversity of the school. I think that if we didn't have that, it might end up being more about the taste of the people who are selecting the projects. So they are tutored from before the selection, it started already actually even though they are not submitting for another three weeks, I've started having a lot of meetings with students who have ideas so they are developing their concepts and as Stan and Gisli and Michael talked about earlier we're interested in inspiring them to ask their own questions, and setting them off with some other examples of films that might inspire them with different approaches, and encouraging research, etc. And they will continue being tutored through the production process and both on the process and on the content of the film and then through post-production and ultimately with the end product.

So we do this both working with just our faculty who are tutoring and evaluating in their own fields but also by bringing in external assessors and by doing quite a bit of peer evaluation and feedback as well. Our final project is a bit of a competition where ideas are submitted, I think about 80 ideas are submitted, 80 scripts are submitted and we get that down to 15 to 18 films that are going into production based on things like the vision of the director, the strength of the script and how will they have managed to develop the idea during the weeks leading up to the decision. So we are bringing in external tutors and evaluators to have different points. During our final project, for example, last year we brought in a Danish feature film director to help us select the projects. But she also worked with them for about a week in developing so she had meetings with all of the short-listed films' writers and directors and producers and worked on developing those further. Then later we brought in another successful Danish feature film director during post-production to work with the editors and directors there. So this is very much similar to what John was talking about earlier this morning, the difference between assessment and evaluation.

I think our school is really focused on assessment which is to improve rather than to judge and hopefully to make it somewhat safe to take risks. So we are really encouraging them to take risks and we have throughout the process both technical and creative feedback from their peers and ultimately when we get to the product, when the film is completed, we have evaluations. We've been trying to refine our evaluation process over the past three years or so because we think it's one

of the most important elements of our teaching. And where we've got to now, it seems to be coming together. We do field evaluation and we do product evaluation. And the product evaluation includes a couple of teachers, maybe an external teacher, maybe the principal but people who haven't been involved in the process of making the films, they will watch them as an audience and talk about the films as an audience and the students are not really given the room to explain or excuse anything. The film should speak for itself in that way. And that's where they sit together as a whole crew and we have that discussion about what is on the screen. Then we also have, given equal weight, field evaluations. So the cinematographers evaluate with the cinematography teacher, the directors evaluate with the directing teacher in small groups. We find that the peer evaluation is quite successful. Probably because we don't have grades so we don't have that competitive element going on. It is kind of a new thing for us to separate the fields like this. And we are finding it to be much more successful than what we used to do which is having the whole crew to sit with the panel of teachers where the teachers would evaluate the film because we've found that the teachers couldn't help but start talking about directing even if they were the cinematography teacher or the sound teacher. This way it's much more focused on the field and can be much more specific.

And then the third element that we bring to these evaluations is something we call "army style" which we've borrowed or lifted from the National Film School of Denmark, which is where each of the teachers sits at a big table and the crews come around. They have 5 minutes with one teacher when they can ask and discuss anything they want and then another crew comes and they have 5 minutes so each crew gets to spend 5 minutes with every teacher and they get to find out what I thought of the editing, for example, if that's what they want to know. So somehow we find that that combination works quite effectively. I feel it's a useful place to start with. How close do you feel you came to what you set out to achieve is the question when talking both about the product and the process. And we do want to encourage spectacular failure but I don't think we always manage to. I think quite often we end up talking about whether the film is good or not. So I'm interested to know how you created culture where it's really safe to risk failure. OK, that's it from me.

Gisli Snaer: Thank you very much. If I understand it correctly the programme itself is very holistic. And there is no specialization so to speak? I mean how do they get selected into crews, etc.?

Sophie Harper: Well, they tend to specialise based on what they've discovered, what they love and are good at. So as the year progresses some of them have kind of proven themselves through a few projects to be really strong directors and to have a passion for that and others want to work with them because they believe in their vision. So I guess that's how it works out. All the learning happens, or the bulk of it, in the projects, which are roughly every three weeks.

Michael Morgan: OK, just to add to our model and explain how it works. I think it's important to say that we do have advanced courses we call master-level courses for students to actually take in the spring. So they can do more than one course in their chosen field – up to three courses a year. I'm predominantly the acting and performance teacher, which also includes courses in directing actors, and tutoring, and advising, and assessing directors on how they've worked with actors but I've also been responsible of script tutorials and all of the things going through to our new model of evaluation and assessment. I know that our model sounds quite intense; it's quite hard to imagine the learning curve these students actually go through over just 8.5 months compared to maybe some of your first years.

But in terms of assessing directors' coursework, I think that we have pretty much the same problems to start out with. And I see them as number one - that the director, of course, is not alone in making this, and number two - that the film is not set, it's not just born in a day. So we've got something very

difficult to evaluate because there are so many different levels of authority, collaboration, influence and compromise that they've had to make all of the way through whether it's doing a project in three days or one month. These are problems that we take to the core of our evaluation and we're looking constantly at how we can always assess them along the way. I remember earlier what Stan said about making decisions on the road. And I think that it's really important that we actually look at the decisions that have been made on the road while it's been made not just at home while it was being planned, so to speak. So in terms of assessing what criteria you use, I think that there are some things that aren't open to negotiation or interpretation. If we've given them a time limit on the film, what form it might be and what content it must have. These things are fairly black and white.

So, we actually assess how near or far they came, or are going towards, realising whether the thing that they set out with is going back to their original visions, what the audience should see in the film there. We are taking this as a benchmark, if you like, to say "This is what you aimed for, this is your goal". Now, what we have to do then as assessors is to say how near or far they came to that "there". So in terms of looking at a process, what we are constantly doing is having tutorials with them during the actual film-making period. We are very much walking hand in hand with them when they are making these films, when they are taking these choices based on different collaborations and negotiations with other fields, casting, rehearsing and actual work with actors on production; how someone turning up late affected the way they show the scene; it could be anything at all. We are taking note and of course advising them of where they could go next each time that they have these particular choices to be made. We are looking at them as being responsible for these choices and that these choices are actually going in towards the vision and intention of their film. But I think it's a bit problematic just to say, well, "this is what you wanted and you haven't quite got there". The very nature of a film, let's call it growing, and not just being born, is that it changes, it evolves within the process of actual direction. I think it will be a complete mistake to say that production just gives you limitations when you are on production shoots. It also gives you inspirations. What happens if you suddenly see a great shot that never came to you during the planning or the storyboarding phase there; what happens if your actors suddenly improvise a scene that was never even written. So it's about taking the inspiration and making those choices on the road as well. It might actually be that they in a way supersede their original vision of how the film should be to take it further along there. And the only way you can really know that is, of course, if you have a dialogue with them about what those spectacular achievements or inspirational achievements got them to there in the end there.

So in terms of evaluating results, we've just said we separate that but, of course, if you are so involved in the process, like I would be with the directing students, then when it actually comes to assessing the work they've done, that you also talk about the decisions they made on the road, during their process and what that actually translates to on screen, how that actually holds up on screen. So in a way it's very difficult and somehow unfair just to evaluate the process without the product taken into consideration there too because of all the creative choices they've made to get to where it actually is. But of course, if it falls short of that, how do you actually evaluate that – when it actually falls short of their original vision and intention too? I think it's very important that you not only look at what they've actually achieved but really look for the potential in where you can see the film was going. What it could have been if they had a different actor, or if they had a different location, or if they had more shots to cover a scene. We are talking very much about an 'organic' assessment that is very much film-maker or student-based because it's coming from their vision and intention. But also when we are looking at the result to actually look for that balance between achievement and potential and ask them ultimately what would you have done away from those difficult conditions, or what would you have done if you had more time, what would you have done if you had less time. So that they always have an idea of where to go next from here.

Gisli Snaer: So am I right to understand that you are basically practicing a continuous assessment as a formative assessment. What sort of academic audit do you have to reply to because in Academia we need to find evidence, to show evidence for our conclusions? It all sounds a lot more as a mentoring film school rather than, like I say, in Singapore we need to show evidence for just about anything. So what sort of auditing bodies do you have to answer to?

Michael Morgan: I agree – we are. We don't do things in a particularly academic way. And in terms of what bodies we answer to, in terms of an actual result there, we don't even give out any grades at the end of it either. So all they have is their diplomas at the end of it and these films they've made along the way. In a way the films have to speak for themselves. Perhaps that's why we put so much emphasis on the actual selection process. Now, the actual assessment process in a way begins when we select the script. It begins when we look for potential in their ideas and what they are actually hoping to do with them.

Gisli Snaer: All right, let's get back to the topic. What are the key points that we are looking for when we are assessing a specialisation, in this case directing? We went through the script this morning and we didn't really finish that. What is it that we will be looking for in the work of the film director? I mentioned that in Singapore we have to answer for absolutely everything. We started to introduce reflective journals, semester overviews and what we are doing now in the final year; we are introducing some sort of a mini-Ph.D. diary, which students have to basically fill out weekly. They submit it weekly to the specialisation lecturer and what is interesting about it is that we see a thinking process, we see someone who says "You know what, I believe that in order to achieve the perfect *mise en scène* I need to do this and this. The next week the same student says: "I was absolutely wrong because I tried it and it completely failed because I forgot to do this and this and this". What I am saying is that all of a sudden now there is evidence of some sort of practical thinking. The feedback of course is important but I'm just wondering how you assess the feedback. How do you assess the assessor? Without any evidence? Is that what you are saying? I'm saying that obviously it's good to hear also that there are still film schools that are doing the mentoring thing because honestly, personally I believe that traditionally a film was always passed from one filmmaker to another. But it doesn't change the fact that in Academia we need this evidence and I'm asking how do you do this? What key elements do you look for when you assess the director? Is it general awareness, is it communication skills, is it the practical thinking, the creative thinking or technical skills? Or maybe all of these?

Andreas Gruber: It's been a whole day already and I'm really irritated. What you say about in what terms is the work of a director evaluated sounds all the time as if it is just a subjective, emotional, very personal judgement. Sorry, it's completely wrong. There are so many hard facts in the work of a director. You can say: "Well, it's properly done, it's a failure" because you can make a really clear decision between what tools he is using and how he is going on with the narration, how he is going on with the process of communication, how is he creating emotions, how he is able to create the structure? All these things are really hard facts, facts you can learn how to do it. So I am really wondering why we are talking all the time about subjectivity of assessment. I am completely worried about this discussion.

Frédéric Papon: The question is how we evaluate the work of a director. And the only way to do it is the product itself. And we don't ask how he got there. I mean, was he easy to work with, was it nice, was he bad to people? The only evaluation is just is it a good or bad film.

Gisli Snaer: What the discussion is about is the testimony of that school. Is it the end product or by what means did the director get there. You mention hard facts and of course when you see a well-

directed film, of course you acknowledge it. It's still an opinion. But what is the evidence that you use to come to that opinion?

Hilmar Oddsson: It's very hard to teach directing because what is directing. It's almost everything and there is one product, the film. Some people think it's only communicating with actors (it's that as well) but it's also everything else. We are all different. I can't do it his way and he can't do it my way. That is a very personal journey.

Andreas Gruber: That is not a very personal journey because I can say "What are my tools and how I work with the tools; do I know how to work with space, how to work with lenses, do I know how to move the camera, what happens when I move the camera this way, do I know how all these tools can help me, etc... It's complex but it doesn't mean that we can't teach it. We will have to immediately stop teaching if we say that directing can't be taught. We should not be sitting here then because if everybody says that directing is a very subjective, individual feeling, then we shouldn't say we teach directing. In my opinion I can teach directing because I think I know what happens when I use my tools. And the better I know how tools work together with all these things, I can make decisions. So it works.

Hilmar Oddsson: I think it's similar to music. I can teach somebody to play the piano like a master. You are basically teaching him the technique. You are not teaching him the artistic interpretation. It may be your taste. Of course, the more a film director knows about all the other stuff, the better he is. That goes without saying.

Andreas Gruber: Just a very special example. The idea to become close to a character, it's the idea to travel on faces. It's very simple. Maybe it works but on the other hand a director should know that you can be in the far distance right angle shot and you create a close feeling, a close emotion to your main character. And that's about directing. Not only the very simple way to say when I'm travelling up to faces, I'm very close to my leading character and so on.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Andreas, please, continue because this is exactly what I'm interested in, this is exactly what we are here for – to hear the criteria. And I think that you started extremely well, mentioning some of them. So I would just ask you whether you would like to continue and go into more detail. As you know, we started with the screenwriting and I gave some criteria, maybe they were not all of them but this was a matter of the panel anyway. But I think that this is exactly what we need.

Andreas Gruber: Well, you know, there are a lot of examples that way. The first thing is to teach just what is directing tool; it is leading the awareness of the audience; and why do you choose this point of view in terms of leading the awareness of the audience. This is one of the main things we are discussing all the time. We are not discussing a break down in a range of different charts; we are discussing a breakdown of the question why should we be in this moment at that character; why should the awareness lead in this moment to that character and so on and so forth. What does it mean to stay with the main character in the very moment after the decision, why do you do this in that way, how can you manage to stay with the emotions of the main character? The whole thing is that you can do it by the motion of the camera as well as without any motion of the camera but you should know why you do this and how to do it.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Do you have any special exercises which follow one or two of these separate criteria? I will give you as an example one of my exercises, which is different from the mythological exercise that I already gave as an example. Because with the mythology they have to follow the myth

precisely but I have another exercise, which is an exercise for functionality. So everything they do, they are free to choose the theme, the characters, etc. but they have to prove that every single thing is *functional* to the story. And if they cannot prove this to me, I say “This goes out”. But this is a small exercise with several scenes, one big episode. It’s not a huge story. So I’m interested in what kind of exercises you use for the different criteria that you establish.

Andreas Gruber: We have a lot of exercises, very simple at that. If you have a protagonist and antagonist, we just make rehearsals for the scene and we keep one camera the whole range through the scene. And one character, we go with him. Just to analyse what happens if you stay with him. And the other way is in which you go with the antagonist and you see him or her and then you show it parallel and decide in which moment it is necessary to stay with the antagonist, and in which moment it’s necessary to stay with the protagonist. So there are a lot of exercises like this – very, very simple one; mainly all with the camera in hands. Just to decide.

Margot Ricard: Can I make a suggestion? We can make a kind of workshop or a master class at the next CILECT congress.

Lubomir Halachev: May I say something about how we assess our students? Regardless of whether they are screenwriters, directors, producers, I think that it is very important for them in every moment of their student life during the first year, the second, the third, etc. to know exactly where they are. Because if we talk about a hobby, it’s not very important to know who you are and where you are. But if we talk about the profession... this is of utmost importance. Our students are very well motivated when they apply and they want to improve all the time and even to be the best. So it’s very important for them to know exactly where they are. And if they are wrong – we need to tell them “you are wrong in this and that” in detail. And because you are wrong I’m not giving you an “A” but a “B” or “B-” or “C” or even “F”. And we must explain why. Because if the students pay me as an expert to teach them, they want to know my expert opinion about what exactly they know or don’t know. I think that it’s very important. If we don’t put grades or marks or whatever, I’m afraid we don’t help our students. In my opinion we give them marks not in order to punish them or to give them something. It’s just to show them what exactly they know and what they don’t know.

Andreas Gruber: Two very short exercises. There is one exercise. It’s with acting trainers, it’s the question, then actors in films, not acting anymore and working with the presence; it’s also an exercise with the camera to show what happens when you lose the body of the character. What you are missing then and what you are getting then. And the other lesson I have from Hal Hartley. There is one written scene, the same two actors, it’s nearly the same location and every student has to make big differences in lighting, in colours, in using lenses and so on. All the time you have the same scene and it’s great to see then the edited scene with the different light, the different camera and all the different circumstances. Just to explain what circumstances mean for scene, or the environment. What does it mean if you created it in a very different way? Lots of exercises like this.

John Burgan: I agree that it’s very welcome to talk about precision when we are talking about tools of film-making. Andreas certainly opened that out to us. I think that’s the best what we strive for. Almost at every CILECT conference I try and mention the name of Andrzej Mellin from the Łódź film school, the person who for me was incredibly precise when he broke down the scene that we’ve just shot. Having said that, the whole problem I have with ordered culture is not about us being as precise and as clear as possible. It is the energy and the time that is spent to prove that we are not short-changing the students. That’s where my problem is. At the end of the day it is lack of faith in what we do. It’s all in the name, of the course, of transparency and openness and fairness. But on some level, particularly with the number of students that we are dealing with, it is the energy that I

spent that is not dedicated to the students but to bureaucracy. And so for me it is an abstract process that's a problem of higher education in Western Europe and has *nothing* to do with our work. We want precision and clarity and we want to map out a student before we even go into those sessions. These are the areas that we are likely to bring up. Think about them, think about before you film but be aware that these are the criteria, these are the things that we are looking out for. It doesn't mean to say that every single item will be mentioned. All my colleagues would say: "Oh, you've got to do a box-ticking exercise. I'd rather spend time with the students working with them on the film and not do a bloody box-ticking exercise. So it's not about lack of precision, I want to be as precise as possible as a teacher. I don't want to be wasting my time proving to an outside body that I'm not some sort of a shyster.

Marc Nicolas: I fully agree with Andreas. Because I think that obviously directing can be evaluated. But the question is only that we always have to resist two things which are very important not to forget. The first is that external evaluation by directors who are not part of the school is mainly centred on something else which is the quality of the film and our consideration is different – it is also about the process. And we also have to resist another thing which is equally important, which is that most of our students learn progressively during their study what is *their* cinema, what is *their* way of making films; are they more shooting people or more editing directors because there are different ways of making films, of course. And this is again in contradiction with what you mentioned. Apparently in contradiction because we have to resist them when they want to argue that "no, it isn't fatal using one of the tools". They pretend that it's their style which has to do with not using the other tools. So we have to balance permanently between "No, you made a mistake" and "Yes, you are right to do this because it's your will to make films". So what you mention is of course self-evident but our practical problem is that apparently we have to fight with the two other points of view which are also important in the evaluation of the work of the directing students. And we see that a good evaluation is to maintain the balance between these points of view which is not very easy because in some situations, human situations, I mean, where there are the panel of people speaking about the film, this could happen. So the question is to separate the way you bring all these different elements to the table. You have to organise different types of evaluation, of assessment for the same work, I mean. One this way, one the other way and one the third way. Which is difficult because if you do this, you take the risk that at the end it's really boring to have three different evaluations of the same film. But at the same time you need it because if not, you forget two of them or one of them. So what we experienced recently in our school is that we change regularly the organisation of the evaluation process of the directing students because every time we missed one of the aspects and then the year after we say "Oh, my god, we forgot this one and it's too important now". And it's something which is unstable. And that means that the discussions that we have regularly in our committees are very troubled because there is only one person speaking of the quality of the script pretending that it is more important than the two others. And every time you bring new people in the circle, it restarts and it's like a Sisyphus debate about good evaluation. The truth is that there is not one but multiple points of view and you have to be strong enough to maintain them in your school. This is our experience.

Mieke Bernink: Andreas, I'm wondering if when they do project work, you apply the system of assessment too or is it a different kind of assessment that you do because it's a different situation; this is a very controlled kind of atmosphere; you can really see what the director has done at that moment. I just say this because of the way our schools are set up with the bachelor system. We've been asked to give grades for a large part of what they are doing.

Andreas Gruber: I did talk about small exercises in a very controlled space, in a studio or something like this; sometimes team teaching, sometimes alone but that's not the film project the students are

making. They have to make four films during the whole study and for each of these films they get a tutor from the very beginning of the developing of the script till the end. But what we are doing in the exercises hopefully influences what they are doing in their film projects.

Mieke Bernink: So the films are not graded then?

Andreas Gruber: Yes.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I will explain a problem and I will ask Andreas and everybody else to try and find an answer to give me because I really have a big trouble with this. What happens when, let's say, you have to evaluate a student's work? And obviously there are many things that are wrong in it. But in the end there are colleagues of yours, maybe even the tutor of that student, who says "It's a good film". And I say: "Maybe in general it looks like a good film. And maybe you like it. But this doesn't work, and this doesn't work." So how do you deal with this problem with the colleagues? Not with the student. Because there are always some people in the panel who say: "Oh, it touched me so much. And I say: "This here is illogical, and the acting is really very bad, and the camera here is very bad. What touched you?" He says: "Well, this scene touched me very much." So I say: "But this is a specific scene. We are talking about the film as a whole. We are talking about the student. Did he do the job, did he learn these things? So how do you deal with these people?"

Andreas Gruber: First of all I have to say that this kind of examinations and evaluations are really a very minor problem for us. It's just a group of teachers talking very informally about what've they seen, and it's more a kind of dialogue than an examination or assessment or something like this. Maybe I am also lucky that this very extreme situation you described - that doesn't work and this doesn't work and somebody raises hand and say that it's great and it touched me so it doesn't happen that often. Of course we have to reflect that there are always some surprising moments in films, that something is coming up – an emotion or a wonderful moment against all odds - that's wonderful. It's not that I didn't stand up and say: "You didn't use the tools right." What counts in the end is just the result.

Jan Nâls: I just think that maybe this isn't a problem, Stan. Maybe this is a good thing because I was in a panel in South Africa where there were staff from four different schools and they were evaluating documentaries and they were really fighting it out and the students were very confused because the teachers were in complete conflict with each other. But eventually it was a great pedagogical moment for the students because they sort of realised that there is no easy way out and there is no truth... I think it was quite good. I mean the staff came from very different cultural backgrounds and there were all sorts of things that you could problematize but you needed also an assessment and you needed to get back to the students and talk to them after what really happened. Because they weren't used to that. They came from the comfort zones of their own schools where it often is like that - the staff agrees, there's a consensus. So I don't know, maybe it isn't a problem. I am just putting it out.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: There is a problem but it is in the panel. I am not talking whether this is good for the students to know that we have different opinions. Maybe it is good for them to know this but I don't even talk about this situation when we are talking in front of the students. I am talking about when the panel has to decide the final grading. So everybody is out, the student is out and the seven people of the panel stay and start to discuss what will be the final grade of the film and then you have two people that say "Ah, it's brilliant. I give it an "A". And then there is another person who says "Come on, this is pure shit, not more than an F. This shooting is absolutely impossible because you see the camera here and do you believe this acting here and this dialogue, etc." This is my question.

Lubomir Halachev: Can I give a very concrete example of what Stan talks about? We had a director, very clever, very sophisticated one. In the second year, when they learn how to make documentaries, she has been allowed by her professor, against my opinion, to make a documentary on Eugène Ionesco's "How to boil an egg". This was a very simple film in one shot where the character puts a pot on the electric stove, an egg and in the course of five minutes we hear the voiceover of Eugène Ionesco's text. All the students went crazy about the film. She won several international prizes and was very proud of herself. Finally, she graduated never making a documentary and she doesn't know how to make a documentary film even today. This is the result of what we are talking about. She passed the documentary class making something but she doesn't know how to make a documentary.

Marc Nicolas: This is exactly what I was talking about and maybe it was not so clear but I think that it also has to do with the culture of the country. I mean that in my country where cinema is mainly an ideology, we have very different opinions among the people invited in the school and this type of scene that Stan described I wouldn't say that it doesn't happen so often. I would say in my school, in many schools probably it happens all the time. That's why I insisted that we, the permanent leading people at the school, manage to balance all these debates. And it can be very bad (I don't agree with you, Jan) because it could be very bad for the students; because if in the end, the opinion that everything can be said about the film, it can lead to what Lubo is describing. I think that really it has to do with our culture, what is our country, what is our cinema, what is our school and probably the problem is not so acute in the different schools that are represented here. But in some cases, like in ours, it's really a permanent preoccupation to maintain this in good proportions, not to lose anything for the students.

Andreas Gruber: For us it's never been this kind of extreme conflict. Just as an example, I really admire minimalistic work with the actors. I've experienced a wonderful French actress. She taught me how to make minimalism in acting. And then of course somebody says: "It's not enough, it's nothing. I like expressive kind of acting and all this stuff." Another example is this kind of what French cinema makes so tremendously and which I like very much – it's the combining of language, of speech with the movement of the camera and the movement of the people. Germany has a completely different tradition coming from the theatre and the actors if they have a very important line they have to stand still and the wonderful thing in French cinema is that Sandrine Bonnaire says "I love you." and even doesn't look at the guy who she is talking to as she is doing something besides and you get the feeling, don't put it that high. But if you are educating directors, what I like is that the director knows what minimalism of acting means, what combining the movement of the lines means, of the body, of the camera, so to make it easy or to make it heavy. And then you can say "I don't like it" or "I like it" but you know what you are talking about.

Marc Nicolas: The problem is that when we mix and we need to mix with professionals who don't have so much experience in teaching, this couldn't be so easy to put into action.

Mieke Bernink: What Andreas was talking about before, with the exercises, I think if you give a student a grade for these exercises that will give them more than a grade for the film, simply said. That you know how important it's for student to have a good grade for a film and these discussions are important and I think in front of the students they are also important. But I think that the grades they get from smaller exercises, where they have the possibility to make, to work on them or to do better, probably mean more for a student than grades for the films.

Marianne Persson: The grading is not a problem for us because they either pass or they don't pass the different courses that they have. But I think that the discussion you have now is very much

involving taste, so taste cannot be graded; taste is free and the teachers may not have the same taste as the students.

Marc Nicolas: But the question of taste is not so simple because in some countries like mine taste is a question of life and death and people will never recognize that you are speaking about taste. They would say “I am speaking about how you make films because the film should be made this way”. Maybe not with those exact words but really it would be in this sense in my country where cinema is something very ideological, and I am not criticizing this I am just trying to explain to you why this taste question is different for us. Probably what is taste in Northern Europe is not taste in France. It’s “let’s fight now and radically because it has to do with cinema, it has to do with our lives, not only taste”.

Sophie Harper: As I work in an international school this issue of taste comes up of course. We have an international faculty and the diverse ages as I said before and the experiences and backgrounds and tastes. And we have some very heated discussions. We are trying to have them when the students are not in the room and get them out of our system so then we can have a less emotional response when we are assessing the projects. Because otherwise taste tends to colour the whole conversation and it can become quite heated. I am sure we are not the only ones who have that issue and also that at the end of a long couple of days of doing this you are really tired and then that person looking really smug pisses you off. I am sure this is normal, we are human beings, and these things come up. But I just wanted to say in terms of assessing documentary directing, I see it as part of my role at my school as a documentary teacher to have a context for what they are bringing and to be able to help them understand that context if they don’t already, connect them to other examples of what they might be doing. That’s a constant challenge and perhaps one that is unique to working in the international environment like we do.

Andreas Gruber: I decided to give an example. Everybody knows, the best way to stop a conversation you don’t like anymore immediately is to say: “But I feel it this way” so nobody can answer anything else because you feel it that way. In terms of the handicraft of directing that’s your taste. Many times it’s just an excuse, that’s what I want to say and so I think in the personal discussion if you say “I feel it that way” you just want to stop the discussion and the way to talk with students about it if they say it’s a kind of taste is to explain what it is.

Jan Nâls: I have a sort of question to Marc and maybe to you and the rest of the floor. A lot of the stuff you are talking about is the different criteria and when you bring out outside people how well is that documented. You’ve been talking about ticking boxes and about externalized knowledge. You have a lot of knowledge about directing but do you sort of communicate it, for example, with an outside person who comes in and evaluates so that you have a common understanding that now, for example, we are evaluating the directors’ work with the actors, for example, and then you break it down in five different components or ten or whatever. I mean how do you brief the panels? That’s an interesting question because I don’t actually believe that there is a conflict between those ticking boxes and I think that that’s a sort of a starting point and then you evidently still end up in this philosophical discussions at the end of the day but that’s at least something to have at the beginning. I don’t know how you do this?

Marc Nicolas: It’s not so easy to conciliate when you meet different people in a panel. There are different levels that should be expressed and that’s why the question is should it be in the same meeting or at a different meeting. We experience different ways. Separating things, different types of discourses and films, different types of evaluation. But it’s not so easy because if you have different evaluations of the same object and you merge those different evaluations it could be

difficult in the end because people get bored. Or if you put them together you have to be a very good moderator to make things coexist and not the one dominating the other. And if I insist on this cultural thing, it's because it's my own experience and I'm still attached to giving students international experience because they should understand this French thing. I don't know if the French people in the room would share my opinion but I think it's a national trait of our cinema.

Gisli Snaer: We spent most of the time basically talking about the end product that clearly many feels that it's the most important and we have our audit culture from England and my school is validated by Goldsmith so I understand your pain with QAA. So sure, we can definitely assess exercises but what I basically wanted to try to get to know during this conversation is which one is more important – is it the end product or is it the process for assessing. I'm not really sure we came to any conclusion but clearly there is a strong argument for the end product and it was given in a formative feedback rather than in... We had the question of taste. I actually have to deal with that too. We have a Japanese lecturer, Indian lecturer, Malay lecturer, English lecturer. It's a very international environment and sure enough there can be a film the Japanese lecturer might say is a masterpiece, whereas the Malaysian lecturer might say is an absolute crap. So we came up literally with what's OK. You focus on your specialisation for the group work that is being assessed by the panel. The cinematographer is literally just looking at that. I don't think it's the best solution but at least it moved us ahead going through the piles of films that we have to assess. Well, thank you all for this conversation.

Panel 5: Producers' Coursework Assessment Criteria

Moderator: Bert Beyens

Bert Beyens: Dear friends, I am your moderator for the first session, good morning. What I just want to say is that my job will be to try to keep a little bit of order in the heated discussions that will follow after Lubomir's presentation on producing. Yesterday one of the themes that came up was whether we assess or evaluate actions or character personality, or very specific, concrete use of tools, things like that. At the end of the day we started to come closer to the business of what we're here for – the assessment criteria. I think I'm not the only one who is very interested in what we will be saying this morning about the producer in the school, because we know that a director puts the credits or the film on his name and the script is written by the author but it's always a little bit mysterious what the student producer is doing in this school, because often the teachers will take over a part of the producer's work, or the school will take over a part of the producer's job. Therefore, we will be very interested in what Lubo Halachev has to say.

Lubomir Halachev: Thank you, Bert. So, I will begin with an explanation about the programme we have in our school, because it took about ten years to start the programme. Actually, after the political changes in the beginning of the 1990s, we suddenly were put in front of the problem who is the producer in the field of cinema, because before the changes the only producer was the government so it was not very clear who is who. In the last five years we've been running the programme but we still face the problem of who is the person who has to develop, to produce and to nurture all the time for two, three or five years a project which is to become a film. It is a master's programme, one year, for those students who were graduates of our school, and two years for the people who come from the outside; let's say from the economic institutions, or from literature or something like this. In the first semester the main subject is called *Development and Preparation of the Project*. Just on a side note, the main difference between the bachelor programme and the master's programme in NATFA is that the bachelor programme is mainly oriented to information – giving the students as much as possible different information. Through the masters programme we try to teach them *how*: how to analyse, how to discuss the problems and finally how to have solutions. If you can find solutions and quickly take decisions, you can be a producer. If not, you can be whoever on the stage, or on the set, or in the industry, but not the producer exactly. This is the main task of the producer – problem solving. So, I give them about 10 assignments during these first 15 weeks: almost every 10 days there is an assignment.

First, I give them an essay with the title "What do you expect from this programme?". The reason is that I want to know who will be who. I mean, in the end of the year they have to decide what job exactly they would like to have. Some of them want to be creative producers. Some of them don't like to take part in this process so they prefer to be line producers. And some of them I'm trying very carefully to push to the distributor's part of the process because we really miss in Bulgaria good and professional distributors. So, there are different people and from this essay I try to understand who wants what exactly. The grade on this assignment I put for the clear vision of what you want to do after you finish the school. If you know exactly what you want, it will help you, it will help me, it will help everybody. If you just write something like, bla-bla, you have to think for your future profession. So, the mark is for the clear vision about what you expect from this programme.

Then we talk a lot about the National Film Board in Bulgaria, and their rules, so how this Board operates, what exactly they want from the people who apply for money. And also we talk about media rules because Bulgarian industry, like all European industries, very much counts on MEDIA support. Then we talk about the Bulgarian National TV Channel, the public TV, which is, by law,

obliged to give some money for developing the Bulgarian film industry. It also has special rules, so we talk about the rules in the public TV. Then I have about one month during which I work with them talking about the screenwriter's job, because, in my opinion, for the producer, especially for the creative producer, it's very important to understand how the scriptwriter's job is done. I mean, what it means to be a scriptwriter, because very often it happens that the producer takes the script and says, "Oh, can you make me a second draft?" After the second draft he says, "Oh, can you make me a third draft?" And I ask them, "Have you ever written a 10-page script? No. So how can you ask the screenwriter to give you every two weeks a new draft? Do you know what it means to write 120 pages? No. So think about this. This is a very, very hard job. Don't say all the time that you want changes. Make your mind after the first draft or perhaps after the second draft and that is it." So, I give them assignments to understand what it means to write a script, I mean, how it happens. I give usually three assignments in three different weeks, in which I try to explain what exactly it means to be a scriptwriter. How he creates, how he invents the scene, the script, the characters, everything. I give them to write three scenes. The first scene should be a romantic comedy, the second one - a horror film and the third one - a drama, it depends on the people. And they should try to describe the scene without any characters' descriptions – only action. They have to understand that the writer should show how the characters move, how the mise-en-scène should look like, etc. I'm not going to make writers from the producers, not at all. But they must know how difficult and how important the job of the scriptwriters is and try to help them or, at least to understand them. So, of course this is the assignment, I put the marks for the cinematic language and the vision. Then sometimes, but sometimes, I give them short scenes with dialogue just to make them understand that the dialogue people talk in the street is not the dialogue in the scene.

Then we have, of course, about two weeks in which I try to teach them how to pitch the scripts. What it means to pitch the idea, what it means to pitch the script. First we talk about what type of quality the producer has to have in a way to be able to pitch. How the voice works. How body language works. How you should learn to attract the audience. How you must deliver the idea to people in one or 15 minutes. Then they take a new film, a Bulgarian film, and try to pitch the idea in front of the group to train themselves. The assignment is very tough for people who never pitched before, so I give them the opportunity to try two,-three times. And what is the most important is the wish to turn the disadvantages into advantages. I'll give you an example. Two years ago I had a guy who spoke very slowly, not in an attractive way, and in a weak voice. The first time I told him, "You know, this is a catastrophe, just try to think about this". And the next day he came and said "I have a solution". I asked him, "What kind of solution?" He opened the door and there was a guy from the acting department. He said, "I convinced him to make a speech". I said, "Oh, you even trained". "Yes, I trained him". And the guy came and really made a very good speech and they made some kind of dialogue. And after this I asked the guy from the acting department, "Which way did he convince you to come and make this assignment. Did he pay you?" He said, "Yes, he paid me." - "How much?" - "Five euro." I said, "Five euro is nothing." "Yes, because he said he has no money now, but he promised in the first film to give me something." So, I gave the guy an A, because first he resolved the problem and then, second, which is very important, he made a good bargain. So, this is the way we do with producers in the pitching. Of course, to teach them to pitch well is very, very difficult. But I give them the idea and then they go from this.

Then we go to the budget. Of course, to teach them how to make a budget is the part of this programme. We start with documentary budgets, then they make a budget for a 30-minute film, and then they finish with a budget for TV drama. So, the students work over the budgets after reading real scripts which have been produced. After they make the budgets and they deliver them to me, I show them films. And they can compare the budget and the film so we talk about this. For example, we put a budget on the screen and then I begin to ask them how they reached the different parts of

the budget. For example, I ask the student, “How much do you have in the budget for one day with a mini bus.” He says “50 euro”. “How do you know? I'll ask my friend”. Then I call in front of them a guy with whom I'm working who is a bus driver and say, “How much did we pay for the bus today?” He says, “About 70 euro, because the last two months the oil has started to go up, etc.” So, the student did bad research and his grade goes down. Then, the second student who put 40 euro for the electricians for the day answers, “Today I was on the set, there was an Italian co-production and I was there and I asked the main electricians how much they are paid in this production. They told me they got about 100 euro, but we'll make it for less than half, so I put 40 euro”. So, in this way we go over the whole budget from the beginning to the end. Of course, they must know the reality of life. They must know the prices, they must know everything. So the grades are about the knowledge of real life and the knowledge of prices in the industry, which is very important.

And here I want to come back to what we talked yesterday about, preciseness. I think it is very important to give them very precise grades. Why? Because if I give a student a B or C or whatever, and explain why, he will understand better that he has some problems, he missed something in the process and this is exactly what he or she must learn, must read, or must understand. I prefer not to be so nice but to give them the reality.

Then, the second semester is dedicated to the production and post-production period. The main goal is to teach the students how the industry looks like, who is who in the industry, what are the relations on the set, in the production and in the post-production period, what it means to complete a film, to deliver the financial report, what exactly the media want from us, because there is a lot of bureaucracy and a lot of documents. All of this you should know when you finish the programme at the end of the year. And also, of course, we talk all the time about the human qualities that are a very essential part of the profession of the producer, because the producer is a leader of a certain group – sometimes 10 people, sometimes 200, it depends on the film. It is always a leading profession. So, will you lead your people trying to convince them with a smile, will you cry or beat them, but you have to choose your right way to lead the people. Otherwise you have no place on the set. You have to choose another profession. We talk about the profession of DOP and who is who in the staff of the director's team, etc. What does a set designer do, what does everybody on the set do. Then we talk about contracts and author rights. But of course, the final assignment is to make a complete project for a feature film and they have to deliver a production plan, shooting schedule, production explanation, and the budget. So, the grade is based on the quality and realistic view and on the understanding of the process. We say that there are three different kinds of budget. There is the so-called comfort budget, which is what everybody dreams about. There is the so-called working budget, which is very close to the process. And the so-called minimal budget, which is, unfortunately, 90% of our real life. Then they have a chance to work like real producers with students-directors on the director's assignment in the second or third year.

Well, finally, just briefly, we are part of the Four Corners Project, which some of you maybe know. This is a very interesting programme, an international programme between ESCAC in Barcelona, our school, The London Film College and probably Metropolia from Finland. It was Aristotle University from Thessaloniki but they withdrew. It's a very interesting project for the students because we make couples of a scriptwriter and a producer for one-year workshops; they travel around our different schools and, supported by the professional tutors, try to develop from the idea to the end. Some of our producers have the chance to go into this programme and have to prepare a master's thesis after that which is mainly theoretical work - we evaluate the cultural background in the thesis and, of course, the language and the ability to use and analyse the information.

Marianne Persson: How many students do you get into this master's programme?

Lubomir Halachev: Not more than 5 or 6. We are a small school.

Marianne Persson: And for the master's thesis do they do it over the year or do they have extra time?

Lubomir Halachev: We give them about 4-5 months for this. They end the school year in June, so by the end of the calendar year they have to deliver the thesis.

Marianne Persson: But they're not studying at the school then.

Lubomir Halachev: No, they are not studying at the school but formally they are students because they use the library, they use all the premises.

Marianne Persson: Are they tutored by you?

Lubomir Halachev: Usually I'm the tutor but also there are other professors who tutor them during the master's thesis.

Sophie Hareper: I wanted to ask about the second semester. You said they are doing production and post-production and managerial qualities but the grades are given for the budget?

Lubomir Halachev: No, the grades are given for the whole package, which includes not only the budget, but also the production plan, the production schedule, the producer's explanation, etc. In the second semester I give them a grading not exactly about managerial skills but on the understanding of the real life the industry. I give them the marks exactly on the documents.

Bert Beyens: Maybe I missed something, but what's the background of your students and is there a selection?

Lubomir Halachev: Usually we try to convince some of our students in the last year – for example, scriptwriters, I usually prefer them to be scriptwriters, because it's easier for them to go further, but they come from a director's class, now I have students who came from the acting class, sometimes they come from other schools, like from the Sofia University or the University of World Economics. Sometimes they come after having some experience, like at 26 or 27, having some experience in TV, or in a big studio. Of course, if the student is not our former student, he has to study for two years – including film history, aesthetics, etc.

Bert Beyens: So, the work they do is more like simulation, right?

Lubomir Halachev: Yes.

Bert Beyens: And then later they watch the film. Can you keep the film secret from them?

Lubomir Halachev: Yes, of course.

Jan Nâls: A question on your method of pitching. Do they usually do it as a group or in this programme it's only the producers who pitches?

Lubomir Halachev: Only producers pitch in the class. We know the film, we know exactly what it is

about, but we ask them to try to pitch in a way as if it were their film.

Jan Nâls: And in your school are group pitches usual in other courses?

Lubomir Halachev: Ok. Yesterday Stan said that we have a pitching session for directors and screenwriters. But it's not exactly a pitching session. Mostly in this pitching session we try to give them some advice for developing the script whereas the producers try to pitch everything, you know, to attract people, just to understand how it should be.

Jan Nâls: So this master's programme is not interesting for your bachelor students in production. They would have learned it already.

Lubomir Halachev: Unfortunately, we don't have bachelors in production.

Jan Nâls: Oh, you don't?

Lubomir Halachev: No, we don't. I think that the producer must be a little bit more mature. This is why we didn't create a BA.

Bert Beyens: Maybe there's somebody in the room who comes from a school with a completely different approach to producing, it will be interesting to compare, because if you say "where's the bachelor?", then of course the question could be, "Yes, how do you teach aspects of production producing in a bachelor programme? How much time can you spend with students? Can you go for a three-year's bachelor and then still go for a master's or is it worth it or not?" I'm asking this because in our school in Brussels, in RITS, in fact for the last five years we have tried to develop our class in production so we have classes but we don't have a real programme for production. So, I'm very interested to know what best practice there is.

Gerlinede Semper: Well, we have a different programme in Vienna. We have a production department. It starts at the same time as the one for DOPs, directors, editing and scriptwriters. All our students have to run through the same courses. So, if someone wants to become a producer, he also has to work as a DOP, as an editor and so on. The first two years in the bachelor's studies are reserved for theoretical and practical work in all five main departments. After the first three years, he will be something like a production manager and he starts to specialise after the third year. In the master's studies they have to become producers so they have to raise money, they have to find the stars and do all the work a producer does. That's I think a great difference from many other programmes.

Marianne Persson: Well, our programme has six functions of film production, which means that it's the script writer, the director, the cinematographer, the sound director, the editor and the producer. We couldn't do any exercises if we didn't have the production class organising all the exercises from the first little thing that they've done this week, that is one day of shooting and developing the script - those four pages of dialogue. Then the exercises get bigger and bigger, the next exercise will be collaboration between the director and the producer and they will develop the story of the director and they will give feedback on the story and organise the whole production. So our students in production go from being production managers to junior producers by the end of the three-year education. And I know the industry is discussing this: why we are educating producers when the industry needs production managers, but I can see that the production management can be taught in one year and then you have to train it a lot in real productions. But if you want to have producers that are cultivated and have wide ideas and can work together with directors and scriptwriters and

new techniques and post-production, and ideas of marketing, then you need to have a close relation with the creative *triangle* and in CILECT and GEECT we talked like 15 years ago very much about the “triangle method” that is responsible for the development of the ideas. But one thing that came up here was the ownership of the films. I think the crucial thing in the schools is: who owns the films made in the school? And because we are a state school, we own the films, because all the funding has been made by the school and they are also allowed to go out on film commissions or sell the films to television. As a matter of fact, they are doing a producer's job, but they don't have the responsibility all the way because they are students. There is a problem there.

Anneli Ahven: I just wanted to comment from the Baltic Film and Media School that they have actually the same approach as you in Stockholm that every single exercise has to be kind of led or line-produced by production students and even when the scriptwriters and directors are pitching for their stories for semester films, actually the producer is the one who makes the first step to choose the project and the producer helps to bring people together. So this practicing of communication skills is very important, they have to learn to bring together the right people, the crews, to find the good link between the cinematographer, the art designer and so on. So they are starting from the very first semester and, actually, think on both sides – creative producing, being a friend of a director or a good partner but also these field skills that you need, the line producing, knowing who you should invite or who you should collect to have a good result. So this is also actually leading to my question: how your producers are getting the field, working on a field feeling, how do they get the experience of the set, if they are invited at a very late stage?

Lubomir Halachev: Well, usually these are people in their late 20s. And as I said all of them have some kind of relation with the industry. It could be, of course, a 4-year bachelor's programme but we think that we need much more creative producers, and not exactly line producers.

Anneli Ahven: Then who is acting as a producer for the bachelor-degree films? Is it somebody employed from your staff?

Lubomir Halachev: We have a couple of people who help students. One of these guys who work in the studio is our former student from the master's programme.

Bert Beyens: I want to clarify. We have a three-year professional bachelor's programme, like we call it in Belgium, and it's production manager and continuity, all the assistance is there. But the creative production element is lacking in our school so that means that our directors are raising their own money and acting more or less like director-producers. But it takes them a lot of time, it's time consuming. That's why many of our students in the film programme will need to extend their studies with more than one year or two years, because they're also raising the money. And criminals as we are, we still think that we own all the rights but the student goes looking for money.

Margot Ricard: The way we work in Montreal, we have a bachelor in *stratégies de production*. It's a three-year programme but it's not only in film, it can be music, it's just to develop the skill of producing something. It can be video, or any cultural thing, because, you know, we always create our programme in the way we are, because it's a small society, we need to be more polyvalent to do things. It's a very good experience because they come on the set in the bachelor degree and they take classes in the management faculty ... and all those things, more than only in film. We have just been doing that for three,-four years now and it's a very good experience.

Lubomir Halachev: Just to add something. We have very, very good contacts with a big studio which is close to Sofia. This was the biggest state studio. Six years ago it was bought by a big American

company and now it's a Hollywood-type studio. I just received a message that they will be waiting for us tomorrow after the cultural programme so you will have an opportunity to see how it works. And we have very good contacts with this studio and some of our students have the possibility to work during the programme in the studio in different positions.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Actually, what I want to ask everyone here, including my friend Lubomir, is what you are teaching. You all talk about producing but I think what we're teaching is production management. You say that you're teaching producing and doing creative producing. I don't think so. I don't think that many of you are doing this. Because producing first of all means to be able to find money. Do you teach your students to find money?

Gerlinde Semper: Yes.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Do you give them the money that they find, whatever money it is, to make a film of their own, which they decide on?

Gerlinde Semper: Yes.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: And if the film is not working properly? If the film is shit?

Gerlinde Semper: So it is shit. Yes.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Good. Because I didn't hear this in the explanations.

Gerlinde Semper: I said that in our master's studies they have to raise money, they have to find the story, they have to find the staff and so on until it's finished. Then they can sell it somewhere, to TV or do whatever they want. We are not the owner of the film. The students are the owner of the film.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: So how do you grade them at this stage? What kind of grades do you give them and for what exactly?

Gerlinde Semper: Ok. So, the mark will be given for things like was this work functional to the scene, to the movie; it also could be that we ask the staff how the work of the producer was; what his way of troubleshooting is; is he able to make fast decisions and proper decisions. These are the criteria.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: So, in the case when you have a producer that found, let's say, 100,000 € and he made a very bad film. How do you evaluate it? Because these are two completely separate things. Obviously as a producer who can raise money he is a good producer. But as a producer who has to choose his own subject and has to find his own cast and directors, to go through the whole process, he is a bad producer. So, how do you evaluate this?

Gerlinde Semper: Maybe it's quite easy in our situation because they all start together in one class. We have producers, directors, DOPs and so on in one class, when they start. And so they become a team very early. And when they go further on, I mean, they build a team and something like a family very often that will work for 10 or 20 years. So it's not so hard for the producer to find the crew. We never had a situation that the film was really shit. So, I can't answer this question: what we would do if it happened. Does this answer your question?

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Yes and no. Because if you don't have this situation, then it is obviously not a complete answer. I want to go back to the Israeli schools. I'm giving again an example from Israel. In

the Jerusalem Film School, they give their students in production complete liberty to do whatever they want. I mean, they give them money from the school and then they can go and ask for money from other sources, whatever they are. Then they have to find their own subject and do the production. And if the film is bad, they fail them. So, in the Jerusalem Film School mainly what they evaluate is the final product, not so much the process of the producer to find the money and to do the productions, etc. According to me, there should be some balance and if the final product is bad, nevertheless, because we are in a teaching facility, we should probably give half of the attention to the final product, but the other half of the attention goes to the producing process itself.

Gerlinde Semper: In the first three years, they have so many small exercises to learn production management, how to act on the set and so on, so I think it would be really hard to fail in a master's class. You have learned so much and you have had so much practice before. I can't imagine that really someone could fail.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Ok, let me put another question for everybody, because we are not having a private conversation with Gerlinde here. If you want to answer the question that I already put - ok, but there is also another question. Imagine a situation when you have a class of five students in producing and one of them is really able to find a lot of outside finances, as I said, maybe a 100,000€. But basically the school would give, I don't know, 10,000 – 20,000 € for the final project. Then how do we evaluate these students in comparison with each other? The films of both, let's say the one that has 20,000 € and he does the film with this 20,000 €, he didn't raise any money from outside, is a good film. But also the film of the other one, who raised another 100,000, is a good film. So how do we compare these people, how do we evaluate this?

Anneli Ahven: May I answer? We teach our students also to evaluate the stuff they have. So, actually the most important question is: is the money needed, is it reasonable for this story, did it help to make the film better, or maybe it raised some obstacles, which the other crew was not able to fulfil? So, actually we evaluate 70% of the process and of thinking for the story, for the film. And 30% is actually the finished product. Is it as good as was planned? Is it better, is it worse? Did it accidentally get better? And since we have very strong deadline rules, the first criterion for my producers is: if you have an evaluation screening, is the film completed? If somebody stands up and says, "Ok, we spent so much time to raise money, so we didn't have time for sound design!", then the grade is lowered. Because for me the deadline is important. When it's a screening, then the people want to see a completed film. So it's a mixture of different aspects. But you have to know your story and I think the producer should know the size of the film they are doing, also during the school. That's our perspective of how we do it.

Marianne Persson: Because everybody wants to have their film ready by the graduation day, the pressure from the others is also a part of the peer assessment, I think. Everybody is finishing their film in time. It doesn't happen that they don't. And, by the way, if one student would not like to do the film with the team from the school, then he would have his budget and go out and do something. It hasn't happened yet but it could happen. And that would probably be the solution for them. And then we would decide how this film should be done and under which conditions and deadlines and so on. So it would follow the criteria for a graduation film, a graduation production.

Jan Nâls: I have a general question. How much do you evaluate and take into account the sort of distribution of the film as regards the producer's work or do the schools themselves take care of it? You know, marketing and sending to festivals and so forth. Or does somebody include that in the student's overall assessment?

Lubomir Halachev: I can answer for our school because there was a question about author's rights.

We, as a school, have the full rights on the films, but, of course, if, let's say, the student-director won some prizes, they go to him. But the students don't distribute their films, we take care of this. I think it's very difficult to evaluate directors or even producers for distributing or not distributing the short film, because even in the industry it's very difficult to distribute short films, you know. Even for practical or educational reasons, it's very difficult.

Jan Nåls: I find it a bit difficult in our school as everyone thinks that the producer's work somehow ends when the film is finished. And then they, sort of, go and have a beer.

Marianne Persson: Our producers have taken the habit of screening the mid-way film, which is in the second year, for the industry. And they invite the whole industry to the school, so they get the experience of meeting the criticism, or the public, the audience. And at the end, with the graduation films they organise the big screening for everyone after they have finished school. That's usually what we call the marketing thing and that's also when they have a big party and they search for sponsoring for the drinks and they usually make it in a cinema in town so it makes it more official than at the school. And, by the way, I gave you a little card. This year for the first time, instead of making DVDs, we put our graduation films on a web site, a special web site. So, if you are on your computers, you can take www.slutfilmer.2012.se

Lubomir Halachev: This is very important what Marianne said about reaching the industry, but in our school, fortunately, about 80% of our professors are involved very much in the industry. Almost all professors are working professors. So, being in the school, students have a good possibility to be with the best industry guys. So we have this connection with the industry.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I have another question to everyone. Now, these films that producers make, they are student films, they are films of the students in directing, screenwriting, etc. How do we evaluate the work of the director, if the producer fails him?

Gerlinde Semper: It will depend on the situation, you can't say in general.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Anyway, this is a film. Is it the film that goes into the director's portfolio and you evaluate this film of the director as well, not of the producer. So, the film is bad. Why is the film bad? Is it because of the producer, or is it because of the director, is it because of the script?

Bert Beyens: Or the teacher? (laughter)

Stanislav Semerdjiev: How do you make this distinction?

Bert Beyens: There are only good films here. All our schools make good films, obviously.

Gerlinde Semper: If the decision of the director was wrong, if he took a bad cast, for instance, he will fail in his work.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: This is a very good question: cast. Who makes the casting?

Gerlinde Semper: Well, I think you always have to talk with each other. So, I think not only the producer makes the decision, and not only the director makes the decision. They have to be a team and they have to talk about the possibilities.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: This is the ideal case: they have to be. But if they are not? I mean, you always

answer based on your idea that everybody becomes a nice team from the very beginning and they stay like this until the end. But this is your school, this is a separate case. In our school this is a nightmare. They hate each other from the very beginning! The directors don't want to work with the screenwriters. The directors and the DOPs hate each other. In the second year, in the third year they don't even want to see each other in the school.

Bert Beyens: Now I know why you invited us all to Sofia: for this subject! (laughter). OK. We will help you out.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I'm joking a little, of course, but there are cases like this, come on. Everybody knows that in their schools there are cases like this.

Bert Beyens: Oh, we love each other!

Stanislav Semerdjiev: No, no, no, no, no!

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: Stan, maybe you should consider getting a coach in your school? (laughter) Maybe a school psychologist, that kind of thing? I think it's really important to separate the mark for the film and the mark for the students. You are judging the film, the product, and you are judging the students on what they've done. And, yes you're going to have a situation where you have a director who has refused to take any kind of input from the people around him. Then you're going to judge him or mark him accordingly, I would think, you know. Or you are going to have a producer who sat back and drank lattes instead of being there to make things happen. Every situation is different, but I think it's possible to really, really look at what has this person done, but what you need for that is tutoring. You need someone to be there, someone to really be part of that process.

Mieke Bernink: I don't really know very much about how it goes with the bachelor, but I know that all the teams making their graduation films, they are being coached by the various tutors from the various disciplines. They always come together on a Wednesday morning, all of them, and then they discuss all the problems, including the ones, sort of, different members of the group hating each other. And so by the end, there is a constant eye-witnessing what's happening in the production and steering it accordingly to make it work until the end.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: It was a bit of a joke, but we really do have this production time, we have a psychologist or a coach come and do exactly that, do meetings, whether it's with the producer alone to help him or help her to guide her team, or if it's a meeting between the heads, you know, director, producer, writer – the key group.

Bert Beyens: I think, except if you want to go and miss coffee break, I would like to give the final word to Lubomir.

Lubomir Halachev: Ok, thank you, but just to add two words, because we talked about the subject yesterday. There are professors in our school who count mostly on the process and there are others who think only about the final product. I think all the time about the process. I'm not interested in this year, or these two years if we will make a great film or not. What I care for is to put the students on the right path and to give them the tools or, at least, the sense of the tools. Of course, it's good to have a good film, but the most important for me is the process.

Bert Beyens: Can I respond to that? I think what was said before about process and product acting balance is best. It's like having a football team only training and never playing a game. I think the

product is retroactive, it confirms the process. And you have a target, a goal together. So, the product is also important. But I agree that you could have a lousy team working in the school, really, and still have a brilliant, unique talent with the film that is going to festivals; it's not telling anything about your education in the school. So, in the process, I think, it's the work that counts. Because products come and go, better or worse, but I think balance is best. I think we should do the two. That's my opinion. End of the session. Coffee break!

Panel 6: DOPs' Coursework Assessment Criteria

Moderator: Michele Bergot

Michele Bergot: Ok, I'd like to welcome you to the session on DOP evaluation criteria. Emilia Stoeva from NATFA is going to introduce herself very briefly and then give us a presentation.

Emilia Stoeva: Thank you. Hello. I'm a professor at the National Academy of Film and Theatre Arts, and I'm lecturing cinematography. Traditional cinematography changed irreversibly in the last ten years. Not only technically, but also aesthetically. Nowadays we are working in expanded cinematographic environment, in a manner which combines the foundations of lighting, composition, colour and other things. So indeed it is only natural for our academy to analyse constantly the situation and the trends in the cinematography worldwide, and then to adjust and continue to develop new disciplines for the students and to perfect the methods of education and evaluation. I personally teach *Photography for Cinematographers*. In our programme we look at the mutual influences among various arts and their constant urge for merging. The cinematic image is closest to photography, on one hand, and the slight imperfection of the human eye allows us to see a definite number of static images as movement. Through the still and film cameras the image of an object existing in reality yet materialises on the two-dimensional plane, the image is printed in a chemical-electronic manner through an optical system. In photography, the separate phases of movement are fixated, while in cinema and television they become one. With students we discuss the main artistic means of film and we look at film as a summary between a real object and the author's subjective point of view. It is true that cinema and photography represent a combination between technique and art. Later I'll talk about this more. The essential aspect of the topic is related to art means, such as composition, colour, etc. To develop their skills and artistic taste, photography tasks are assigned to students in cinematography.

Here you can see are examples of their photographs and some of them are good, others not so good. I didn't choose the best ones on purpose. Some of them are details, optical close-up deformations, split-screen, architectural photos, landscape. For students, the favourite exercise is the remake of portraits of famous films, they are good at it. To perform their exercises, students use multimedia drawings, photos, dioramas, etc. This task allows doing profound analyses of the means of expression used. During a debate held with the whole group, some corrections take place. This gives our students the chance of public speaking, which is one of the problems in our high school education. With public speaking we decide a lot of things and I encourage them to have a dialogue, to be critical and to ask questions. In high school they don't teach them to debate in public. Therefore, in our discussions we hold some forms of debates where two people are disputing on a topic from opposite points of view.

Now I want to discuss some technical aspects about this symbiosis between photography and cinematography. While discussions about the advantages and imperfections of both technologies are held, the photographic camera found its natural place in shooting kinetic images. And if the development of photographic equipment in the 1890s has led to some profanation of photography, here our friends from France may agree with me that the period of photographer Disdéri is very hard for this art now, because photography is art, but in this period a lot of people, especially Baudelaire, blamed him that it's a profanation, it's not art, painting is the real art and photography is only a copy, kitsch, etc. But now shooting audio-visual products is more accessible than it has ever been. We see young people shooting short stories, short videos, video art, and installations. And they are not sufficiently prepared to act. They do not know the means of expression; they do not respect editing, and do not ask about dramaturgy. In the end we have eclectic results dressed in a brilliant high-definition image. Here we have to quote the profound work of Prof. Vera Naidenova, she is a very

famous critic in Bulgaria, maybe some of you know her. "We have good reasons", she says, "to speak already about the presence of another cinema. As there is no greater blessing to art than diversity, it would be preferable to enjoy it and to get acquainted with it. However, on the other hand, the other cinema is made by cinematographers who know the rules of cinema. In our country, the problem of eclectics is multiplied as we like imitating foreign cultures." In Bulgaria two weeks ago there was a national film festival and some of the films, a few of them, were this kind of imitation, they were made by young people who do not have enough knowledge about cinema, about the rules of cinema and these films were eclectic without any innovations in them.

And now, more specifically about the technical aspects. The advantage of shooting using a photographic camera for cinematography recording is its accessibility. High-quality images against less money, high sensitivity, etc. And when a standard group of crew is normally five people, the operations done with photographic cameras need one person only. This reminds us of the Nouvelle Vague in France in the 1950s and 1960s when the new compact equipment was badly used providing the opportunity of a small shooting crew to shoot outside the studios. The small dimensions of the photographic equipment give the opportunity to have access to any terrains and means of transport, too. Another advantage is the very rich optical set which is photographic, but can be used in cinematography. Some modifications are offered where cine lens can be used. Last but not least, a very big sensor, twice as large as the dimensions of the frame in cinematographic cameras already exists. This is directly related to the plastic contents of sequences, the depth of field – it's one of the important things when comparing shooting with professional cameras and with amateur cameras – depth of field is important for professionals. With a normal lens of a photographic camera a less sharp background is achieved compared to the 35-mm lens. Also, people pay less attention to a small camera with a few crew members. The multi-camera shooting in a TV studio with a photo camera is not a problem anymore either for obvious reasons – the price to rent them is equal to the price of one Red One. The disadvantages of shooting using photographic cameras: there is significant contrast of the image. With this big contrast we cannot see the details in the darkness, in highlights. This is one of the big disadvantages. But nowadays we have software to soften the image, to soften the contrast. Other disadvantages are the refreshment of the matrix and the processor during the movement of the camera which makes it difficult to do faster panoramas. Finding the focus, in my view, is one of the biggest disadvantages. The imperfections of the photographic lenses are also revealed when you focus from one subject to another and then the zoom effect appears. We still have some limitation in the colour correction during the final processing. Practice shows that photographic cameras should not be considered to be the main body in feature films, although there are entire films shot with a photographic camera in Bulgaria. We would recommend it in some specific locations only.

I would like to end up with an interview with Vittorio Storaro who explains that nowadays more than ever we talk about cinema like a technique and art at the same time. It is important to know the first place what we are telling, in the second place, how do we do it, and only in the third place with what technical equipment. Photography and cinematography will continue to live in parallel with each other for a long time. When we think of the future, we try to imagine the time when technology will be prevalent, but when we look back, we see that the things that really matter depend on the context and evolution of the film as an art genre. It's more likely that the future will have a pact between the two technologies, because one of them takes its power from the creativity of the individual. One of the problems with our students is when they are shooting in photography they have plenty of time and it's completely different from working in a normal film crew. They can do it cheaper, they can do everything with Photoshop immediately, but to do it later in post-production is completely different and it's not so cheap as with Photoshop. That's one of the things which is a little bit disappointing for me when I work in a photographic way with cinematographers.

Michele Bergot: Are there any questions or comments?

Lubomir Halachev: You know, 30 years ago it was very difficult for students, especially DOPs, to learn the craft of cinematography. Because they had to learn a technology which was very difficult. Nowadays, they come with several films already shot and say, "I know everything about cinema, about editing, about sound". If you have some special secrets, give them to me immediately and I'm going to work. If you have not, I don't want to study in your school. So, this is a very big problem and I would like to know how other schools deal with that.

Margot Ricard: I don't have an answer to that. But I have a question. How do you do assessments?

Emilia Stoeva: This discipline runs for one year only and it is not a major one. So, the assessments we do are basically in the end of the year with a whole group of professors.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I would like to ask a question, which my friend Bruno asked me before we came into this room and I don't know why he is so shy not to ask it himself. How many of us here are cinematographers? Raise your hands, please. Three? In this case I doubt we will have a lot of questions about cinematography itself and obviously this is what Emilia was talking about. It was an extensive report on what she teaches but I am sorry, I didn't hear anything on the assessment criteria and I think we are here to talk about the assessment criteria based of course, on the personal involvement of the presenter within a certain area of teaching. Obviously there was a misunderstanding when we asked for the presentation. Anyway, I would like to hear the input of all the colleagues who teach cinematography on how they evaluate their students.

Michele Bergot: May I take the question a little bit further and perhaps ask those people who have cinematography departments within their schools to talk about how they evaluate the students. For example, in my school we have a film course, it's essentially cinematography, and it's run over three years. So, we have criteria on which we judge the cinematographers, but we judge them not only on cinematography but on all the other aspects they need to actually make their films. So it's kind of the reverse situation, if you like. Their specialist area is cinematography but we also have to see whether the script is ok, the editing's ok, the directing and production, and so on and so forth.

Enes Midžic: I disagree with Lubo. Today's students know nothing about the profession, about light, colour, framing, camera movement, etc. We have a cinematography department – a three-year BA level and a two-year MA level. I wrote four books on cinematography. My students don't read my books. They don't care. They want to shoot films. I've been teaching for 37 years cinematography. I can only guide the students through the process. Only that, this is my role. Thank you.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Evaluation criteria?

Enes Midžic: What are the criteria? I am the criteria. I see the films and I judge, wrong or right.

Bruno Gamulin: No, this is a joke. We evaluate the rushes before the editing. That's a very important moment for the DOP. To discuss the rushes before the editing, because after editing the whole process is out of their domain. But after they come as a colour timed finishing. Somewhere it's a completely different department that organises the colour timing study. And you can evaluate and put some remarks or grades on the DOP student. But the rushes, I think, are crucial because that's what they'd done, how they coordinate the framed expression inside the frame, and how you coordinate expression over the movement of the frame with the movement in the frame: that is visible on the rushes, the film is not finished, it's just a component of the DOP's work.

Michele Bergot: Are you evaluating the students' work or are you evaluating the process? Is there a difference between the way you evaluate the BA students and the MA students?

Enes Midžić: There is a difference. MA students are semi-professionals. My students work in Los Angeles, New York, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia.

Emilia Stoeva: I am sorry that I didn't talk about the criteria. Maybe I had a wrong impression on what the presentation is expected to focus on. So, now I would like to say a few words about how we judge our DOP students. First of all, of course, it's how they use the tools and on which level they use them. Second, but really important, is did they work along the elements of the dramaturgy. Because if they do whatever they want even if it's beautiful, that's not enough. And the third one is the style, the homogeneity of the style.

Marc Nicolas: It is just a comment on Lubo's statement. We are now like music and visual art schools. You can make cinema at home, like you can make music at home, but conservatories have existed for many years. People took the violin and played at home. For the last 15 years it has been possible to make cinema at home. And before you couldn't. You had to be in the school to get film stock, big cameras, etc. But that doesn't change the nature of an art school. And it's the same with visual arts, because you can paint at home. Of course, if you make a sculpture with iron or I don't know what, you can't. But you can do a lot. And if the students are stupid enough, because they are young, to pretend that they have nothing to learn, normally after a few weeks of confrontation of their work in the beginning and the work of the masters you can understand that it's really a question of age. Then, there is a question which is more serious, because it is more difficult to deal with.

In my opinion, I myself am an amateur photographer, which with those types of cameras which cost nothing, are very different from the ones we had when we were teenagers in my generation. Now you can't miss a picture. Whereas in the past, you could miss, of course, if you forgot to just put the right aperture, it was dead because everything was dark. Now the machine does it for you. But very rapidly you realise when you use that type of camera that it has nothing to do with making a good picture. You can show me your testimonial where you have been, just to say "I was there with these people", ok, but it has nothing to do with photography. And it's the same with cinematography. So, if students say they are good when they are beginners this is something we have to deal with at the very beginning of their studies. And I think it's quite easy, because if you confront them with the masters' work, and I'm not speaking of the 40s or the 50s, but today's masters, they can understand that it's not only a question of the good light in the frame.

Concerning the question of books, I'm sorry to say that, yes, they don't read books anymore. So, what is the problem? They don't read books at all. But if your books were on the Internet, they would read them probably in pieces. So you need to cut the books and put them on the Internet and they will read them. I'm joking but what I want to say is that times are changing. And we must face very clearly the new conditions, like the fact that you can't miss a picture, and deal with this at the very beginning of the course, so you can concentrate on the real things and the real things, I think, haven't changed for a long time. And then the ideology battles begin between people who think that cinema has to do with chemical industry, and those who think that no, it has to do with representing a moving image on the screen. And the fact that it's not chemical is not so important. But this type of battle was lost at least 15 years ago, and probably it will be over in 10-15 years from now because nobody will remember what it was about. Almost all our works are now on digital, especially after we started using digital cameras. But our students are still interested in films for some reason which is more of a vintage experience, like the way we dress. Sometimes you like to wear an old jacket

because it makes you think of your grandparents. More seriously, they do it because now they understand that making a film makes them work on specific lighting and other issues. But it is much more an exercise than anything else, and it is working in all cases concerning the real grain, the physical consistence of the image. So, we discuss with them every day the question of film vs. digital.

Michele Bergot: Just to add something to that. In my school people do come to us because they want to work on film. The most important fiction film that the students do in the second year is shot on 35 mm...

Marc Nicolas: All this will change soon... Next March Fuji will stop producing film stock. We don't have to complain about that or we can go to the Fuji headquarters to tell them that they should continue. Now the majority of film is made with digital cameras, so we have to adapt obviously. That's all.

Michele Bergot: It is changing the nature of our courses. Nowadays courses are lens based media courses and not specific cinematography or photography. Two of the best, I would say, or aesthetically best student films last year were part of research projects, I will probably speak of that later, but one of them was from the film department and it was primarily based on stills. And the narrative was told primarily through the sound work with a little bit of movement and once again the sound had fundamental importance in terms of how the narrative flowed. You know the blurring of boundaries started years and years ago. I don't know if you would like to comment on that or to move on, or to go back and talk to more cinematographers about how they evaluate since our objective is to talk about evaluation criteria.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I probably look like an old pedant but I want to repeat my question again. Where does the evaluation of the cinematographer start? Are we evaluating his technical abilities or are we evaluating his creative abilities? What is the meaning of creative abilities for a cinematographer? Obviously, in the first year, even in the second year the cinematographer is learning the craft, he or she is learning the camera and how to use the camera and how to use the lighting and the movement of the camera. Obviously, this is a time when we assess the technical knowledge that he or she has, which is easy. I am sure that we don't have to lose much time on this. But then, when does the real evaluation process start? When the cinematographer starts working with the director or earlier or late or parallel? And again how do we measure the work of the cinematographer?

Marc Nicolas: I would say that it is exactly like the evaluation we use in the other departments. First you have to make a distinction between the exercises and the films. The exercises are usually centred on a specific question and you can easily isolate how the tool or the point has been worked out by the student. You can even have very technical classes and it doesn't change because of the change from film to digital. You can compare the first and the second version of an exercise; you deal with the contrast and the low light. There are many things that you can judge. And then you have the films. What kind of relation has been built between the director and the cinematographer? What were the choices made in the very beginning of the film? You can evaluate the intelligence of the DOP related to the choice that has to be made on the technical chain for the film. In the old days it was simple, you went on 16 mm or 35 mm, you have to choose the stock and the lens. But now it is much more complicated because you can, for each film almost, invent a specific technical chain and then change in post-production. There are many technical options that you can use, all of them concerning the image. What can be evaluated is whether this was a good choice for this film, what did it bring, what was made possible or impossible with the choice of this or that camera concerning the style of the film, the artistic project? There are many things that you can evaluate in the relation

between the DOP and the director, just like in the old days. I would say that these are the main points; you could go into further detail if you want.

Bruno Gamulin: The social aspect of the DOP is very important because in the field or in the studio they control and manage a great part of the crew – electricians, grips, gaffers. And the DOPs are very important for the team work of the crew.

Lubomir Halachev: In the first and even in the second year, we try to separate the evaluation of the DOP from the evaluation of the film directors. But in the third year the evaluation of the DOP is done simultaneously with the evaluation of the film director. In the three years we oblige every director to work with a different DOP. In the fourth year, when they make the diploma film, we give the directors the freedom to choose the DOP. It could be that three directors shoot with one DOP and three DOPs in the fourth year stay without a diploma film. This is the evaluation. “During the first three years we give you support, i.e. we oblige the directors to work with you. But you didn’t show anything in the three years, so nobody wants to work with you on the diploma film. This is your mark, the grade of the market. Nobody wants to work with you. This is your future. This is the diploma.”

Stanislav Semerdjiev: What is the grade that you give to that student?

Lubomir Halachev: Maybe not an F but something like a C.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: So, nobody wants to work with him or her but he graduates. How does this student graduate?

Lubomir Halachev: How will they graduate, we don’t know yet. We just started discussing this situation in the school. Maybe someone will help us find out. This is going to be a very good resolution of the conference and an excellent help for us because we are looking for an answer.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: When we go to the next session on sound and editing, this is a big problem. And I would really like to ask you start discussing it now and continue under the next session. With the director and with the script writer, even with the producer, it is different because they have to choose a product and to show a product and this is basically their product – this is my screenplay, this is my film as a director, this is my film as a producer. With the DOP and the sound director and the editor, these people are *chosen* to be in the product. And if they are not chosen, and this happens often, again I will go to my yesterday’s example with the American schools where many students may not be invited to participate in a project. How do these people graduate? Or more importantly: *why* do these people graduate?

Jan Nâls: We too have this problem. We have a new system and if they for some reasons cannot make a big project in the end like a graduation film, they are allowed to work with one another, a cinematographer and a producer, or a cinematographer and a sound designer, etc. They are not allowed to work on their own. And then they make a small project which is not maybe a coherent but it is some sort of a project and then they write a thesis that accompanies it. So, it is some sort of a hybrid. It has solved some of the problems as we have an obligation to the student that he or she has to have the right to graduate even though they cannot find their place in a production. This is just a practical example of how to do it. So, they write maybe a 50-page thesis to accompany their project.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: So, it is more of a theoretical graduation.

Jan Nâls: Yes, but it can be, for example, a cinematographer that makes some sort of a project, it can

even be an exhibition, but he or she has to work with somebody – a producer that produces the exhibition or a sound designer that makes the soundscape to an imaginary movie, and then he or she works with an editor. They create their own project that is somehow creative and then they problematise it with help from theory and literature.

Gisli Snaer: In Singapore we have the problem of many students knowing how to do something bad very well, so they come in with the notion that they actually know how to do things. With Singapore being a small country and with me being an active filmmaker in a small country, we abandoned film a long time ago and thank God for that. I do not miss the old times at all. The way we assess cinematography is three-folded. It is basically what we call a research portfolio – all the notes, photographs, mood boards, dramaturgy, reflections, everything that the students are gathering together in the forms of a documented journey. And then we have practical coursework – these are all the technical exercises. Basically we are not studying film grain, we are studying pixel values, colour space, lock space. Basically all cinematographers in the third year take a Da Vinci course at a very advanced level. So, they understand how much they can overexpose and underexpose and they understand what a compression artefact is and how to get rid of it, etc. I remember when I was at La FEMIS we would actually use a microscope to look at the film grain and now we don't do that. Now we zoom 100% with software. And then obviously is the final film. But as I said it is a distribution of grades, therefore the producers in our programme have the permission to literally remove a member of a crew if that member is being difficult. Which means you might have a cinematographer who doesn't have a thesis film but that student will graduate because the quality of the coursework leading up to the practical film and the portfolio of the thinking process do exist. And basically what I am saying is that there's a distribution of grades. Even though you don't get to make a film, you can still graduate with a grade but it may not be high, given that it's a three-folded grade.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: I just wanted to say that when we have that situation that a student doesn't have a project, it is usually because of something in the way he or she operates that is not theme-oriented. Firstly, there's a discussion with that person about that theme. I think it is an important part of trying to teach them or for them to understand who they are and what they need to work. If it doesn't happen that they after that discussion manage to find a theme, then we start looking for external projects that they can work on. So, if I have an editor who doesn't have a project, I will say then "if no one wants to work with you, it is your responsibility to go look for someone". Now, I'll start looking as well, of course, because as you say we have the responsibility to help them to graduate, they have to graduate and they need a project to graduate. So, we do it like this. For the final projects up until this point we have had for a project a certain amount of money that we give for a project. But that's really difficult because it is sort of a question of whose project is it. Is it a director's project or is it the producer's project? If it is the director's project, does it have a producer? It is sort of who's the system based around. So, we are going to try this year for the first time to say that the producer gets the money. It is the producer who is allowed to say, ok who is going to work. In the task we have given them for the final film it also says they are responsible to have three or four students from the school that have to work on this project. So, it is up to them, the producer, to build his team from the students in the school. I don't know if this is going to work but this is sort of the next attempt to deal with that problem.

Gisli Snaer: If I may add, we've been doing that very successfully and obviously before anyone is fired from a production, the producers have weekly meetings themselves and these meetings are minuted. That's basically conflict management which I believe is quite important for a producer to understand – how to solve a conflict. And they will actually try to swap between themselves before anyone is humiliated to the point of being fired which is not a very nice experience for anyone. And obviously we'll try to avoid that as much as possible. It is very simple, we are the studio and the only

people I will hold responsible are the producers and the producers go down, etc. So, we are trying as much as we can in a school environment. But it has been very successful. The graduation period is almost three months of shooting. And you can say immediately, well, this one will survive on a feature film set. I would definitely recommend a producer-led programme. Because previously it was all directors, but I truly believe it has changed from a complete disaster to an organization that has at the end of it a product.

Elvis Hoxha: I apologize for my English as I am not able to express myself very well but just to make some difference between a big school and small schools. When I listen to you speaking about the market's logic, I am very surprised. In our school there are all in all 20 students who study for three years. I approve of evaluation and assessment but I don't think we can measure such things. I find the transposition of market logic in the school problematic and it seems to me a little exaggerated.

Gerlinde Semper: I just wanted to say something about the assessment criteria. I agree that it is a very good idea to see the rushes before grading and to talk to the student. And on the other hand, if it is a documentary, we can ask the DOP to edit what he or she has done. In this way the DOP can see what went wrong. I think it makes a huge difference if you are working on a documentary or on a feature film.

Michele Bergot: In that respect, in one of the exercises on other films, we ask the students to edit the other group's film. I don't know if that's common or current practice but it teaches several things: it gives them a more objective eye on a project.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: I have a question to that. Because it is changing so much what a camera person has to provide, has editing become a part of your curriculum that you also give marks for or is it just something like "OK, they need to know this but we don't count it as part of our curriculum!" Do you understand the difference of what I mean?

Michele Bergot: Well, in our school as I said, there are cinematographers, so if I take the second year, just the middle year and perhaps the one which is the most interesting to discuss because they are mid-way between becoming professional and actually needing our help all the time as students. They have two major projects in the second year. The script is chosen first, so out of 16 people not all of them write scripts but all the scripts that are put forward are between 8 and 10. They discuss the two winning scripts that are the ones that are made into films. The film makers then become directors, they have to choose their own DOP from a team of 8, there are two teams of 8, and then the rest of the crew rotates. I don't know if that's clear. So, editing is part of everything, editing is part of the process. All post production work is actually part of the process. The sound engineers that come from the sound department and work are also part of that process. All is evaluated and there's a distinction made subsequently in terms of evaluating the product, analyzing the finished product as a film, as a member of the audience. There is self-evaluation, peer evaluation, evaluation by professors and practitioners, at the same time.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: All the camera students must edit?

Michele Bergot: Absolutely. It is integrated into the project. Let's put it this way.

Gerlinde Semper: It is the same in our curriculum. As well as in scriptwriting and directing.

Jan Nâls: Just a quick question, you mentioned self-evaluation. How does it actually happen?

Michele Bergot: It happens in the formal evaluation, when they are in the screening room they verbalise how they worked. Something I forgot to talk about is that the respect of imposed parameters and rules is reasonably important as well. They are evaluated on whether they have respected the time constraints, have they gone over budget and so on and so forth.

Emilia Stoeva: I want to go back again to the evaluation of DOP and I am thinking about the technical and the aesthetical part of their work. In the past, the cliché was that they had to learn the technical equipment and that was all. Nowadays this is not possible because the cameras change every year but the supplies and the accessories change every day. For the final result we mainly pay attention to the aesthetic part of the work and the taste of the DOP. That's why we push them not only to be informed about what's going on throughout the 120 years of cinema history, not only to watch films everyday but also to pay attention to exhibitions, to be part of the art life, not only with regard to the cinema.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I have another question that comes to my mind. Very often when the audience goes to the cinema hall they come out and they say, "This was beautiful cinematography!" They don't even speak about the film because they don't even remember the film one minute after they are out of the hall. But they remember the beautiful images, the beautiful movement of the camera, whatever. And sometimes I hear the colleagues, even in my school and other schools that they encourage the students to show the cinematography in the film. So, my question to all of you is how we deal with a situation where the cinematography is so visible that the directing and the script are lost because of the cinematography. How do we evaluate this, how do we assess it in the end? Obviously it is good cinematography, technically well-made and it is following in some way the script but it is so visible that everything else is not visible. How do we evaluate the DOP student in such a case?

Enes Midžic: His job is good but there's no link with the job of the director.

Gisli Snaer: It is again this continuous conversation about the product and the process. Because you see, we talk about a good film or a bad film, usually it means that the script is very weak. It can be aesthetically gorgeous, incredible sound design, but the story is so weak that we fall asleep. Is that a good film or a bad film, we always come back to this. Is it the product or is it the process and the contribution of each student to it? Yes, this is a collective end-product but shall we fail the cinematographer because the story is so weak and it is a boring movie?

Elvis Hoxha: Last year in our school a good student was very satisfied with his diploma work. The cinematography was fantastic but the film didn't really function as a whole. At the end he got a low grade because all the professors evaluated each part, and his average was six out of ten. If he had been evaluated on the cinematography it would have been a 10. The director didn't do his job because the cinematographer got the place of everybody, including the director.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: So, we consider the director and the cinematographer equally guilty of not being able to communicate?

Enes Midžic: Our best student film ever had the worst ever camera but is still an excellent film.

Michele Bergot: We have the reverse situation. Most of our films are appalling because the script is weak, the directing is weak, etc. but the images are very good. Are there any final comments?

Marc Nicolas: Yes, there's one final comment. I feel that Stan is sitting next to me very unsatisfied with our answer and I understand why. But I want just to assure you, Stan, that the DOPs are

evaluated and even in the most difficult part which is in films, not exercises, like diploma films. You can really make a distinction between what has been decided by the director, what has been brought by the DOP, what has been decided together by the director and the DOP concerning the equipment, the choices made in a direction led by cinematography questions. The type of lighting you can put, the discussion of lighting and production, what kind of finances can you put on this scene and what kind of a decision you can take concerning lighting if there's no money for that scene. There's no money for the installation of lighting, for instance. All this can be discussed precisely and can lead to evaluations of what has been brought by the DOP in the artistic decision of the director. We really do this as part of our evaluation.

Michele Bergot: Thank you. I'd like to thank Emilia who was our keynote speaker and wish her a very happy birthday.

Panel 7: Editors'/Sound Designers' Coursework Assessment Criteria

Moderator: Su Nicholls-Gärtner

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: Welcome back to our next session. This session is on sound & editing. First, we will have Rositsa Ilieva from NATFA to make a presentation and then Elena Rusinova from VGIK, then I will say a few words about how we work at the ifs, Cologne, and then I will leave the floor open.

Rositsa Ilieva: Thank you. The past few decades were a period of complex political and economic transition in our country. And that certainly led to reforms in the educational system. For many years film editors in Bulgaria were trained through practice. When the state owned cinema centre Boyana Film Studio ceased to exist in 1991 only a few of them had a university degree in editing. The same year NATFA introduced a course of study in the degree Film and TV Editing. It was a very important moment in our film history. 20 years ago we were about to build something new despite the historical collapse. But the question was what will make young individuals study editing. What is the most important thing that will draw the attention and keep people in that profession, especially when there is also a collapse in the movie production? The answer was more than obvious. Film editing is an art. It has to do with the ability to express yourself and to tell a story in the most exciting and interesting way your imagination can create. That is, of course, if you manage to obtain the skills and technique needed to complete your task. This had to be made clear to young people who only saw and understood the technicality behind the creation of a motion picture. This may sound peculiar at first, but it is key to understanding the business in that sphere and it still has a huge influence on people who are or wish to be in it. The most important thing was the positive motivation and knowledge driven development regardless of all the changes.

The degree in Film and TV editing is a four-year bachelor's programme in which theory and practice are equally present. We are four professors teaching editing at the Academy. Two of us are directors and the other two are editors. Each editor has to accomplish two types of practical coursework, special editing trainings and work in a film crew. Special editing trainings test skills, knowledge, and the ability to work with the film language in the continuity of time, place, action line, editability, type of shots, type of cuts, movements, point of view, composition, etc. Another important part has to do with working with the editing software. Editors must show their work with synchronizing sound with action, screening dailies, preparing the material for editing, making the first assembly, rough cut, supervising the recording of narration, voice over of dialogue if necessary, post synchronizing dialogue, fine cut. After that they find and lay sounds as atmosphere, background, effects, lay music tracks and finally mix all sounds into a final soundtrack. The last thing is post editor's colour balancing as well as making titles, subtitles, and copies. Then they screen the film for feedback. It takes grids, self-discipline, hearing negative reactions and criticism of their work. If they can combine pictures and sounds effectively, they may well model the visualization of perception. This includes observation, feeling and thinking as ways of studying the perceptual process. In this way they can improve their editing skills but it takes a high degree of concentration and knowledge. The work in a film crew is obligatory. Every year students make short documentaries or fiction. They present those films at the final exams in order to pass their studies for the academic year. Students start with a short observation of a 5-minute documentary in the first year, a ten-minute documentary and ten-minute fiction in the second year and 15-minute documentary and up to 30 minutes TV production in the third year. And in the fourth year they mainly work on their diploma film of up to 25 minutes. They are assessed for working with the crew and for their particular skills and knowledge demonstrated in the film they edited, as well as the level of the presented art. The work on documentaries and fiction films is different in many ways. We require from the students of directing to start working with a cinematographer and an editor from preproduction when they have only an idea for a film. This involves an editor at every stage of the production and provokes his or her

creativity. As they research, shoot or edit, they will revise the idea and control the meaning. In our low budget projects, the editor has more responsibility. During their research, they analyze each situation and explain their motivation and purposes of making the film. From it they make a list of sounds and picture materials that they will need to obtain, as well as the scripts or story boards they will work on. Editors can choose how to organize the editing process. While editing they must think, observe, listen and feel the potential of the film. They must be independent, creative, with original, alternative ideas and solutions to structure it successfully. The film structure comes out of the material and the editor starts searching and experimenting in the cutting room. How he or she uses the grammar of the film to restructure and compress the essence, how he or she looks for the best story and the best way to tell it, how he or she cuts the different camera movements that should form the editing style of the film, how he or she cuts actions and reactions – everything matters in the assessment process. If they cut long exchanges how will they use the rhythm of speech and movement? Every edit must be motivated because something always initiates the actions. The editor must know the process of perception – how information comes to us, how we scan it for meaning and decide what action is possible to unlock our sublime to work. It is the editor's job to define the duration of the shot. How through the strong rhythmic structure of the film language will he or she keep the audience concentrated? How can the film connect to the emotional experience of the audience? Those are the main aspects of the assessment criteria for students studying editing.

But as I started with a short flash back to history, I will finish with a brief view of the present. For our students it is important to have the opportunity to show their films out of the country. They are much more motivated when they succeed winning prizes. From 2004 to 2011 NATFA participated in 283 international film festivals with 331 selections and won 92 awards. Most of the best editors nowadays are NATFA graduates. Maybe you know some of the titles of the movies that received awards: in 2008 the film *Dzift* won the second prize, a silver St. George, for directing at the Moscow film festival and the editor of the film won the prize for the best editor at the Golden Rose International Film Festival in 2009, and the best editor of the Bulgarian Film Academy for 2008 also. The film *Tilt* was made in 2010, the editors Kostadin Kostadinov Fozzy and Zoritsa Koseva won The James Lions Editing Award at the Woodstock International film Festival, New York 2011. In 2010 *Shelter* was made and the editor Kevork Aslanian was awarded the best editor for the Bulgarian Film Academy 2011. In 2011 *Love.Net* was made and the editor Alexandra Futchanska was awarded the best editor of the Bulgarian Film Academy in 2012. So that was for the past and for the present and how about the future, we will see. Thank you for your attention.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: If there are no immediate questions, I would ask Elena to speak now.

Elena Rusinova: The sound department has existed in the structure of VGIK only for the last 20 years – same as Rositsa mentioned about their editing department. Before that sound designers studied in the practice. There was no higher education. In two universities in St. Petersburg and Kiev there was education of sound engineering. These universities still exist with different names but with the same ideology. A sound engineer is a technician who is able to make models of equipment and work with the technical part. So, when this specialization started at VGIK we adopted the system of workshops which we have had for 90 years. And the ideology of studies is to combine theoretical and practical elements. It happens all together. There are some pluses and some minuses about this process. But anyway, students are very busy with this schedule. Another idea, as I mentioned yesterday, is to help people who came to the university to make a society of professionals and also to become a crew. So, they are looking for partners in the future. And as my experience shows at the moment, it goes very well. Sometimes they rotate and change some people of the crew, but the director, the sound director and the director of photography usually go together. Concerning grades, for the theoretical part there are both oral and written exams. The oral exam goes in the form of an interview and

there's always a dialogue to check the real theoretical knowledge of the student. Sound directors study at VGIK for 5 years. From the first till the fifth year there is practice on production, real production, where students go for six months to professional studios, and for another six months they prepare their diploma work and written exam. The written part of the diploma work sometimes is an explanation of their screen work, or sometimes it is a research of the subject which is related to the sound of the film. So, the first year of studies is particularly theoretical, students get information and they have sort of basic practical exams but they are not working as a crew with students from other departments. In the second year they start to be a part of a students' crew which produces films. There are different parameters of the films, different lengths, and different tasks. We have a system of workshops and there is a leader of the class who determines the ideology, who determines even the style of his students. There are also supervisors who are able to give individual consultations, private talks about problems that a student may have during practical work and experience their student production. It is always very hard to give real marks for this practical work. We are always in dialogue with students, except during the final exams or the exams at the end of the semester. We discuss the sub results of some production, and we have screenings just for the sound directors. We do not introduce directors, or directors of photography, or other members of the crew, because it is like a home conversation. Before we do the public screening of the work, or the public discussion of the results, we do this in our workshop because it is a psychological moment. We tried to do this with the public, with guests, with other members of the crew, and it was always hard, because there is always criticism. I don't know about your students, but our students are very critical. And before they say some nice words to someone, they see the black side of the moon. But for the last 5 years it has been working fine and the professors and students like it. At the same time, we make classes with the rest of the students from the university, directors, producers; everyone who is a student of the university has the so called sound class. For the different specializations the topic is presented from different angles because for some it is more production, for film critics it is the film analysis of using sound in a film because for us it is very obvious but when you read articles or books concerning modern film, you very rarely find some information, opinion, or analysis of the sound as part of the dramaturgy and the audio visual image. There is another point which is perhaps very individual for our structure, for our university, and this is probably a minus. We have a big number of directors at the moment and a little number of sound directors. For us it is good because we always have a competition of scripts which our students choose and we just help them to work with the details. When students apply to the university, they are not just coming to a workshop to get some technical skills or experience, they already know that they are going to the family and there will be always someone who has a very strong subjective opinion and they come to learn this. That's how it works. So, in this case it works probably a little bit like our colleagues from Croatia told us today. The master's is subjective, the panel of teachers and professors who are all involved in commercial practice, their opinion is more important than marks. Usually if you analyse the system on the basis of the marks we give our students, sometimes it is like high, probably middle, probably a fail. So, for us to motivate the student, we always pay attention to the result, because the result is the most important thing. We sell the result to the market, the finished film like a finished product. All students are motivated to finish this film but as teachers we pay more attention to the process of increasing skills or whatever. As I already said students do at least one work in one year, usually more, but it is very hard because their schedule is very tight. They do this all the time but they graduate on the basis of their diploma work. All other films are not in the curriculum, just in the programme and we don't put marks, we just help them to develop their professional skills. It is easy to do that at our university because we have our own production studio which serves as a model of the professional path. Of course, the rules are a bit different from the rules of commercial studios, because they have a little bit more time, not so limited conditions to finish their work because they use these facilities not only for diploma, for graduation work, but also for studies in the second year. It is just the first step to make a film. We don't depend on any external facilities or professional

studios which is very helpful, so we just make the schedule of using these facilities for students which is very good. Now I'll just go to the result of the public presentation of students' work. Probably all of you know that we have an annual international film festival at VGIK but before that we have more than one week of watching student films, we have a discussion within the university with professors and students, a sort of a festival but without external guests, to help them to present their work and to be ready to answer critical questions because it is not only for members of crew, it is also for film critics, research post graduate students, and so on. Criteria of putting marks are easy to formulate when we talk about theoretical, exact knowledge, and it is not that obvious when we talk about the practical side of this. For us it is an individual opinion but it is still the case in my department that the future lives of our students, the degree to which they get involved into production, or even their CV up to the diploma work show if they are on the market already, if professional directors are interested in them. It is true that even if they are full-time students and study during the day, all of them are involved into professional projects as an assistant of sound, as a sound director, as a sound editor and so on. So, that's probably the best mark for them, to be on the market. Sorry if you didn't find my presentation very structured. I am ready to answer any questions.

Tatiana Tursunova: I just want to add a couple of words to what Elena said because last year we had our fourth international summer school and as the school is held in English we always invite foreign directors. We had only two student sound directors, who did a marvellous job, I have to say. And I think we are going to repeat this, to take students from the sound department. Because before that it was only professionals from our film studio, we had to take them because there was some technicality involved. But this time they showed a quite high level.

Rositsa Ilieva: And I didn't mention that we don't have sound design. We train our students as editors to edit picture and sound and when they make their diploma work they take the sound designers from outside, professional ones. I hope we will have a sound design programme to complete the crew because it is very important.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: If you still have some patience, I'd like to just say a few words about how we work at the ifs because it is a little bit different. Just very shortly, the ifs started out with a further education programme in picture editing and a further education programme in sound editing. And we were trying to fit a little bit of sound design in this picture to editing, of course, and a little bit of picture editing in the sound design course but we simply found that it was not enough. And with the problem of finances that also came at the same time, our Professor Alves said that we were going back to the old school and we were going to create a bachelor programme to have picture editors and sound designers in the same programme. So, it is probably a little different in some of the schools here. But we found that it works and it is possible for the students, they are fine with it and what happens is that at the end of the programme you have sound designers and editors who understand better how to work with sound according to picture and you have picture editors who are thinking about sound when they are picture editing. So, it's been a good change for us and I just wanted to say that as a starting point of how we do our evaluation criteria. The other thing that I just wanted to mention is that we talked a bit this morning about the blurring of boundaries between camera and editing. This is happening with sound and picture, this is happening with directors and all the departments kind of moving into each other and it is happening with the way in which production is happening. As you were saying that editors are being brought in the beginning I think we really had to start to examine in our school this sort of traditional way of looking at filmmaking with pre-production and post-production, in that traditional sense there's a lot of grey zone. So, we had to take that into consideration with our evaluation and our criteria for evaluating the students. All the other departments in the school work in a way that they grade the projects because that's the largest part that the students do. The directors, the producers, the writers, they all grade the

projects, but they don't grade the exercises that come because of the way our school is set up, because the exercises are usually taught by external teachers coming in and it is usually professional people from the industry and sometimes it is difficult for them to understand what it means to grade. They have an idea for a fantastic workshop but this kind of idea for teaching is a bit foreign. That's how all the departments work except for the editing department. With the editing department we said it is almost impossible for us to give grades for projects because they are so different. How are you going to compare students when one is editing a documentary film and the other one is editing a web series, and the next one is editing a short film? These are very different tasks. There are, of course, things that you can look at within the editing process. We started off from a point of saying, "OK, we are going to evaluate all the little exercises because it is very controlled. You can have a music clip which you want them to edit, or a dialogue you want them to edit. And we are not going to grade the project work." But this is also somehow not really satisfying because they put so much work into the project that they do. It's been a long process for us and I can just give you where we are with it right now. We kind of found a scheme to look at how to evaluate the project work. And as I mentioned, the students that we have do all the picture editing and all the sound design up to the point of mixes. So, they have to prepare the soundtrack and then we go out to a professional studio and it is mixed by someone in the industry. It is great to have that step where they have to prepare their work for someone who is going to work on it further. So, I would say there are three different foundations that we use for the evaluation and the first one is the concept. Talking about sound more than picture, we work with evaluating the first cut or the assemble edit and then the final piece. Working with sound editing we are looking for a concept of sound in the film. And in this sense we are watching the film to see if the sound brought anything new to the film or if it supported the film. And what you don't want to have is when it says something completely different from what the film said. You have two people sitting in a table and it is a very quiet moment and someone has made this wonderful rainforest atmosphere which is running at the same time or a busy street that is in the background and it doesn't have anything to do with this film, it is completely different. So, the concept is something that will take about 50% of the mark. Then the other 50% we split into two pieces, the 30% we say is the craftsmanship, so we are looking for really basic technical skills, like are your tracks clean, are there noises in there that don't need to be there, things like that. Is the sound fill clean, is it supporting the character, are they cleanly cut? Are there holes in the soundtrack, did they forget to fill them, these kinds of things. And the last 20% for us are the communication skills. I think for the picture editors it should be more, it is much more than what they have to do but 20% is what we have at the moment. And basically what we are looking for is transparency in the work of the editor because of the way we make films now, it is so important for someone else to be looking at your work or to be able to take your work, and take it further, whether it is visual effects that have to be done with the picture editing, or whether it is the sound design that has been given or will be given to a mixer, or perhaps you are working in a team with many different sound designers. So, transparency is very important for us. And we are looking for the intention of what this person is trying to say in the film that is really on the tracks. The other part is of course, things like the picture editor mediating between the other team members. This thing has to happen sometimes in the editing room when it is very clear that something doesn't work and it gets a bit emotional and you can see that this is an important skill for the editor to be able to deal with the psychology that happens in the editing room. Along go things like informing the team or the sound department if the material that they get in the editing room is not ok, informing the cameraman if something is going wrong in the shoot or in the material they haven't got. And along with that is organization, of course, who is working on what and how to handle that, and how you show leadership skills. So, those are pretty much what we use. So, it's a little different of how you are working. And that's about it from me, I think. Does anyone have any questions?

Luc Haekens: I have a question for you, Elena. Do you have an editing programme at VGIK?

Elena Rusinova: Do you mean picture editing? It sounds strange but we don't have a department for editors at all. There isn't an editing programme as a specialization for the full-time students. If you are a sound director, you have many hours of practice on doing sound editing, which is clear. With regards to editing of the picture, it is a part of the programme for directors.

Tatiana Tursunova: I would like to add. We do have a programme but it is different. It is a two-year programme aimed at people who already have higher education. It is separate from sound. We have quite a few foreigners from Japan for example. We had a Russian who could barely speak English but he was one of the successful graduates of this programme.

Lubomir Halachev: The last question drew me back to our yesterday's discussion which gives us the right to ask all the questions, all the time about the different panels. My question is very much related to this panel but also to the first one. There are schools which teach all their first year students together. They make no distinction between editors, directors, etc. This is the same at La FEMIS and many other schools, I suppose. As we think about going to such a programme in the first year to have all directors, editors, DOPs in the same class and then give them specialization in the second year in accordance with their wish and after they are being evaluated by the professors in the end of the first year, I just want to ask some colleagues to share their experience as to whether this works well. It is interesting for me to know that a very famous school is not teaching editing but at the same time there are schools which do not teach producing or sound recording. Those of you who use this method for the first year studies could share their experience with us.

Bert Beyens: You can think more and follow up on me. I think in RITS we have a bit of a hybrid situation. I've been feeling very uncomfortable with it for many years. We have a strict distinction between what's called the techniques and the creative side. The professional three-year bachelor programme for cinematography, editing, sound and also production management. It is a three-year professional programme. And then, on the other hand we have what we call today the academic bachelor, with a master's following on that, and it is for writing and direction of film and TV documentary. And that's a four-year programme. In the past, the cinematography, editing, sound, would be very much together. Over the years it became three very distinctive things. Today editing will be mostly picture-oriented editing. Of course, the sound is there too but with the new post production things are changing and we need to think. On the whole, in the past we had a general group trained in the first year and then more and more split it up. The same applies to the people who come from direction or writing, or producing. And we have them all in the first year; we start to guide them in the second. So, we monitor and we try to find out whether they have a talent for writing and now we have like six workshops and they will have to make a choice. They will do three out of the six workshops. And they will present two solo works. I'll give an example. Someone does the workshops for film, documentary, television. Obviously, this student has the idea to become a director in one way or another. But then he has to present at least two solos, e.g. a documentary and a film. He doesn't present for television, but he has at least to obtain a pass. If he has no pass for the solo he would not go to the third bachelor, or he would come back the next year and present another solo. If he is not good enough, there's no way for him to move to the third bachelor. I am happy with the system of guiding students and finding their talents but it takes a lot of work to implement the right communication in the school with teachers and students, all the time. It is time consuming but I will still prefer that to a system with admission like my colleagues and friends in Amsterdam say, we take six directors for documentaries, six for fiction, six for sound or whatever, fourteen for production, and I never understood that because how can you know. Schools are different, there are many differences. Age is a factor. When they come to your school, Marc, and already have a background, it is different. When you have generation students coming straight from

high school and they are eighteen, how can they know? So, then you need more time.

Mieke Bernink: The average of our first-year students is 22. Still, they will change, but it is true, they have to say what kind of speciality they would like to do in the school, but then the first year programme itself is for two-thirds, a general programme for all the eight or nine disciplines that we have got. And all the students do every specialization, but the students who have actually chosen a specialization need to have a certain grade in order to go on to the second year of specializing in that particular subject. And there's a kind of a combination but it is difficult, and that's really a problem in our school, and more generally flexibility in the system. There's no flexibility and it is difficult for the students to change. If they came in as script writers and then they want to become directors, within that silly six-pack structure, that's almost impossible. So, there are definite problems with the system.

Bert Beyens: It is not that in our school students are like cats moving all the time, that's not what's happening. It is a different process and we are changing the programme now so we want to get rid of that distinction with the cinematographers, the editors, the sound designers. We want to bring the programme much more together now. So, we will try to develop new programmes and start with a whole group. It's just crazy that you have a teacher in film history for the creative group and it is another teacher for the so called "technicians". Of course you can look at film history from a cinematographic point of view. That's true. But that is in follow-up courses. In general, the basic stuff should be the same. And also there's this big tension, this feeling of inferiority and frustration with the "technicians". Obviously, this creates fights. What is artistic? I think cinematography is artistic. So, we really want to change that.

Andreas Gruber: I find this topic very interesting because we are also dealing with the question of specialization in terms of who is going to be a director or cinematographer or so on. And there's a big danger in it because on the other hand, everybody says we need to have people who are able to collaborate. And my idea is that a good director has to learn a lot about scriptwriting and light, and camera work, and editing. And a good editor needs to have a lot of knowledge about how to work with actors. We are in the position to know how to manage the situation as we have, on the one hand, we are creating directors and on the other hand, we have generalized people from the other departments who should be able to collaborate. It is a very demanding question for us now because it is a question of how we can structure our schedule so that everybody has a really broad input in their professions.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: In Cologne there are two institutions, the ifs and the Art Academy (KHM). The KHM works exactly this way. Everybody comes and you don't say what you want to do and you have to find out for yourself what it is that you really want. And we work very differently. We also have students who are about 22 years of age and depending on which field they choose they have to have at least 6 months of experience working professionally. I don't really want to get rid of this system of having them chose before they come to the school because I think it is a really important step for an applicant to be able to say "I have looked, I know what it is, I think I know what it is to be a director, I have an idea of what the camera does and what the editor does because these are extremely different careers". I like that they come with that and I like that they have to apply to a certain department and at the same time we are doing the same thing, the first year is now more and more everything offered for everyone in the sense that you really have that basic information knowledge, the film theory and it is very important that everyone has this. So, we are mixing both.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I see now we are going back to the admission process and obviously we will start again from the beginning because now we shall start discussing how to admit students to these

programmes. I will tell you what I think about that but then I suggest that we go to our two speakers because I respect them and I would like to ask them questions. I have always thought that in film we actually have three divisions, and they are very obvious: one is the people who work with *words*, and this is a separate craft from the one dealing with *vision*, which to me is a separate craft from the one where you work with *technology*. I personally cannot be a DOP. I can create images with words but I don't know how to create this and I don't want to create this with a camera. And I am sure there are students like this even in their 18s. They know exactly that this is what they want to do. And there are students who would like to do things with technical equipment. And there are other students who want to be set designers, who want to be animators. And you see that we didn't even put up a panel here because I knew there would be no animators and set designers here. We seldom send professors in set design or costume design, or animation to all of these conferences. They go to different types of conferences where they really discuss things that they are interested in. They are completely disinterested in what we are talking about today. But anyway I want to ask both Elena and Rositsa the same question in reverse. If you don't have any students who study editing or sound, then who does the editing in the students' films?

Elena Rusinova: This is done by our studio where there are only professionals. These are professional editors for student works. There are some engineers and some technicians who take care of the equipment and who are responsible for the order in the studio. But the rest is done by the students.

Marc Nicolas: This is time for me to ask a question that I have wanted to ask a long time ago because it is the same in Poland. The editing is done by the people at the school. Does it have something to do with the censorship?

Tatiana Tursunova: No, no, no. This has nothing to do with the Russian mentality or other things you might suspect. Every director, even the sound students and the film critics, they take one year to study *theory of editing*. So, it is not like we are not familiar with that at all. Let's go back to the school because I was there all the time with the eight-member crew. We have a technician from the VGIK studio, a fully equipped film studio, but the vision of the film is in the mind of the director. It is the director who is making the film and it is as simple as that. And the course which I mentioned earlier is targeted at the people with higher education who want to improve their skills, or they come from a foreign country, maybe it is cheaper for them to study in Russia.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I just want to get a little structure here. I am going back to assessment. Who gets assessed for the editing of the film? The master of the student? Who gets any grading for the editing? The student of directing? When you have the film, you have a student of screenwriting, of directing, of camera, of sound, and you give grades too the student of sound, the student of directing, etc. And when it comes to the component of editing, you don't evaluate this?

Tatiana Tursunova: The director gets evaluated.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Ok. And my reversed question to Rositsa is: who gets grading to the sound in the NATFA films?

Rositsa Ilieva: The director gets a grade for the sound because it is the concept of the film.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: So, in the VGIK case we consider the director also the editor of the film and in the NATFA case we consider the director also to be the sound designer? Don't you think this is strange?

Jean-Louis Dufour: What I wanted to say is that in Toulouse the students are not specialists and don't specialize in any topic before the third year. The first two years they deal with any kind of topic just like editing. In the first two years there are editing classes but there's no editing department, there's no specificity. There we teach aesthetics and techniques and digital editing, but we don't have a proper section. Yet, some of our graduate students become editors once they leave the school. In fact, once they finish school they have this overall global perspective on the job because all the directors are also editors. What we are trying to do is that teaching, the education process is not modelled on what the job is. In fact, we are just trying to take the student from the time when they enter the school to the job itself, it is a process, a way to help them through. It looks quite coherent to us, it's not because there's no editing department that there's no editing in the school.

Marc Nicolas: I just wanted to comment my notes on what Stan said. Generally, just to remind everybody here that the disciplines, the professions and the history of our schools form something very complex because of many considerations which have to do with national tradition. And of course my question about censorship was the reverse of the other reason. I think you don't have an editing department because the great Russian directors focused on editing in the very beginning of your school. Of course, we understand that you put these things together, definitely. But then in the American schools they don't have sound departments although sound is very important in American cinema. But this is done by other schools, not by cinema schools. Also, set design - you would say that they have nothing to do with us, but if you discuss that with our set design department, they will say that they are part of our business and we have a lot to discuss. For instance, we have cinematographers, but if you go to America, cinematographers are also set designers, sometimes they are under the same umbrella as our designers. So, it depends on many things which have to do with our own opinion, the tradition of our schools, the tradition of our countries, some hazards that happen sometime. I just want to give you an example with my own school. When it was created 20 years ago, coming from IDHEC, it was created with seven departments and one department was added two years later. I myself added two others seven years ago. I am going to add one next year, whereas IDHEC had only one department - filmmaking - and it had 30 students a year. This is a complex matter to discuss and it has to do with what cinema is for each of us.

Rositsa Ilieva: When it has to do with giving a mark or assessing an editor for sound, they have an exercise to edit a dialogue scene which means that they work mostly from the dialogue and then comes the picture. Which means that I can assess the work with the dialogue. Thus I can give the assessment for the sound. And because I know all the material and I know the dialogue from the script, I know the edited part of the dialogue in the whole movie, and I can also assess what the editor did with the dialogue for the final part in the process.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: I had also one more question for you because you said that the editors are brought into the development of the script as well...

Rositsa Ilieva: Yes. They start to work together and to discuss the style of the picture or the style of the connection between shots. That's the way in which the editor is involved.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: We tried to do this with our editors, tried to get them more involved in the script development process. And it didn't work. The discussions were fine but that was it.

Rositsa Ilieva: If there are two or three-camera scenes to shoot and they start to discuss the point of view, the director and the cameraman, it turns out that with regards to editing, there should be a discussion with the editor as well.

Andreas Gruber: I'll try again with an example for the importance of collaboration between editing and directing because one of the main mistakes with students is that they think that you can change the speed or rhythm of a scene, of creating the scene in the editing. And to explain to them that this is no good is difficult. You need to know something about editing before you start to have those ideas to change the rhythm or speed of a scene. For me it is very important for those collaboration workshops to be held.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: We are over time. I just want to say one thing to close this and I think it is probably nothing new but I want to say it. I think we all realize with the digitalization of the editing process that the job of the editor or the sound editor has changed because it is possible now for anybody to make videos at home and the question comes whether we have to teach this, if everybody can do this, do we have to teach it? And my opinion is "yes, we do have to teach this because just because somebody is able to use editing software and put a clip on YouTube for me does not mean that they know how to make a film". And it definitely is something that has to come into all the different departments, not only directing, but also producing and visual arts and sound design. It is important. Thank you.

Panel 8: Diploma Assessment Criteria

Moderator: Stanislav Semerdjiev

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Welcome to the final session, my dear friends. It had to be Tanya Nelson who had to chair this session but finally it turned out that I should do it. I don't know how but I hope that you will survive me. So, how do we assess diploma works? The diploma work is obviously a kind of a big joint effort. And from what we heard in the last sessions, we touched the matter several times, and in this session I suggest that we go into some more depth because basically we already know that in the diploma work we evaluate everybody's work, we assess all the different components. Probably, we do that in a way in which we assess some of the course works of the students. But in some schools definitely, the diploma work is a different thing. It has a different meaning and importance. So, I suggest that those of you who really think that the diploma work is such a big event in students' lives, start talking first. And we have Frédéric Papon from La Femis to talk on that topic.

Frédéric Papon: Thank you. First, I would like to speak about La Femis. La Femis is not part of a university; it is a national public school offering four-year programmes. We have ten departments, seven departments with six students each year for four years, and two special departments for script continuity, which is a three-year programme, and for distribution and exhibition, which is a two-year programme. The other departments are scriptwriting, directing, producing, image, sound, editing and design. For each of these departments, two or three times every year the students get together to produce a film. And La Femis has a special first year, in which all students work together and they choose their department before the start of second year. We produce four films in the first year. They all work with sound, camera, etc. And it is very important for us because it is a time when they discover the work of the other people that they have to work with at a later stage. It is very difficult to organize, but it is very important for the students. It is the beginning of learning how to speak with each other. In France we speak a lot, even during the shooting. But it is very important to know how to speak. It is important to respect each other. We have no permanent teachers. All teachers are active professionals. We have 20 directors of departments, two directors per each department and they don't have permanent positions. And we have a 5 people team who teach every year at the school. And we change everybody every year. There are 500 people – quite a number of people – who make films in France. Everybody could be a good technician, or a good director, or a good pedagogue. In the second year the students have a big exercise on documentary. And every student in this department, in this function, has to work with people from the conservatory of Dramatic Art in Paris, which is a workshop with actors. And in the third year, they all produce the first big film of the programme which should be written by script-writing students and directors, and everybody works in his or her function. I explain everything because you will understand that at La Femis evaluation is not just a 15-minute exercise at the end of the 4th year. Evaluation is all the work and all the discussions, little exercises, done during the four years of study. In the fourth year every student prepares a project, the so called diploma work, which is different for every department. Very quickly, I will explain what the diploma exactly is for each of these departments.

For script writing it is a feature film, a script of a feature film. In this department students write one feature film each year. And they must participate in the script of another project. For production, it is a three part programme for the diploma of the producer. They produce one of the films of the directors of the school who is in his or her fourth year. We have six directors, six DOPs, six engineers. Even if they don't want to work together, they work together. So the producers produce the six films of those directors. They produce also one film of one person they chose from the school, like sound engineers, DOPs, script writers or editors. And they must have also another collaborative project, if they have time, after these two works. They must in the end write also a thesis. I think in France we are the only art school which has asked for this kind of work for a very long time. The thesis is very

important because this is the end of something and it is not only the end of the school with a production, with a film, or with an installation. It is also a part of an exchange because for this thesis the students have to have a number of meetings with a lot of people and sometimes they discover a new part of the work, of French cinema. For the directing department, we ask them to write and direct a short film. It is short because of time, money and everything else. But we decided to develop the writing of feature films for directors because after the school they will have a project to develop. And it is very different. I think it was in the first day that we spoke about the difference between short and feature films. And I think it is very different to write and direct a short or a feature film. DOPs must have a thesis on a technical question and for this they must make a film. For the sound people, it is the same. They have a thesis and there should be a technical question in the thesis on the basis of which a film or sound installation should be made. For the editors we ask for a little diary of the work of the year. It could be a diary of the four years spent in the school and then they show the films they have made. And they show a film with archives, something which exists. For the set design department, it is a project for a film set and a thesis also. And for script continuity we have a thesis. The relation between the director and script continuity is important. Now we propose the continuity girls, because we have only girls, to write a script which is not to be shot. And they prepare this film, just as if it was going to be shot. So, we will see, it is the first time. I hope it will work. We thought it was very simple to find a script, but it is very difficult because directors and script writers want to keep it secret. And for distribution and exhibition it is only a thesis and a question about the work of distribution or exhibition of cinema at this or that place because we are lucky in France to have a lot of cinemas and a lot of theatres and different situations. Well, for every student we ask for an evaluation. So they write about the four years at the school and what has happened to them. It is five to ten pages but it is very interesting not only for us, but also for the students, because they must take stock before leaving the school.

Margot Ricard: How many questions do you ask through the thesis?

Frédéric Papon: About 100-150. It depends on the department and on the students. It is very simple for some of them to write, but for some of them it is a new world.

Anneli Ahven: Is the thesis like a real academic thesis with footnotes, bibliography and so on.

Frédéric Papon: In a perfect world it would be like that but for example for the distribution students, we have a thesis which is a real working document for the profession because nobody writes about this profession and this kind of work. And even if it is not academic in the presentation, etc. it is very interesting and for a lot of them it is the first writing experience on this subject, even for technical subjects.

Michele Bergot: Just wanted to ask if every research project, every thesis has to have a practical component and if this practical component stands alone, or if it illustrates the thesis. What is its function?

Frédéric Papon: The film must serve as an illustration or application of the thesis. For the DOP and the sound it is really the case. For production, it is not really a question of application, but for the DOP and the sound, yes.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: When you screen the film, where do you screen it, in front of what audience?

Frédéric Papon: Yes, I understand what you mean – I spoke about the school but I said nothing about the diploma. OK. We are in the huge cinema of La Femis and there is a different jury for each

department. The jury consists of Mark and me, a lot of times the President of La Femis who is a filmmaker also comes; and we have three people from outside; and we have the two directors of each department; so that is a total of seven people. The student shows the film, we see the film all together, we go to another room and discuss.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Do you watch the screening with other people like other students from the school or audience from outside?

Frédéric Papon: No, only the jury is present the first time. All films must be shown to the jury before they are shown to the public.

Bert Beyens: Even the students are not there?

Frédéric Papon: No.

Bert Beyens: It is a very different experience because we have more or less the same model with the jury from each department, but we always have screenings with the students.

Marc Nicolas: In theory this jury is open so anybody could come. More often there are only two or three people there who are students of the school and sometimes friends and family of the student. But most of the times they prefer not to open it for the other students to be there, at the jury presentation. And we have many occasions of showing the films somewhere else, later.

Frédéric Papon: After the discussion with the jury and the student, the screening is open and everybody could go and watch the film.

Bert Beyens: I think we should make a precise distinction between assessment, feedback and diploma film (the jury moment). The jury is there and the student can present himself. But he doesn't have to be. If he doesn't want to say anything, that's fine. If he wants to say something, that's fine too. After all the films have been screened, we ask the jury whether there are questions, just questions, for some of the students that are there. So, there's no discussion or feedback. The students are there and members of the team, family members are not there very often. So, there are about 50 people. The jury will be sitting in front and it is a rather serene atmosphere. Then we say that we will go with the jury and the same day they will have results. The students will get a phone call later, or we will meet them later. Because it will take about 5-6 hours of discussions and deliberations of the results. We have so many feedback discussions with students before but then we say that the real world starts today. Later your film is at a festival, the public will like it or not but will not say why. It ends here, we've discussed enough, and we have explained enough. Now it is cruel, it is good-bye. The fact that we say it like that means that in general there's a friendly atmosphere, not like years ago. I remember times when we saw films at the end of four years of work with students which were not really good enough. That is painful. Most of the times though, we see rather good films and there are no problems. So, in the discussion we always give the floor to the visitors first, before we speak, and sometimes we have juries of up to ten people. Another thing that we do is that in order to prevent the formation of alliances, because what could happen is this: I am sitting there and you are in the jury and I think you are my next producer. So, before we start the discussion you put on paper a number from 1 to 20, it can be 8, or 16. And those numbers will appear on screen. Then, immediately, there are no masks, I gave an 8 and Elina gave a 16. She is my next producer, and then we discuss and we always ask the extremes to start. So, you didn't like it very much, why so? Or you are just crazy about this film but you are pretty alone, what did you like? You always listen to the visitors and to the extremes. And then we talk and talk. That's how we do it.

Jean-Louis Dufour: It is quite simple for us because we are part of a university. We have the same rules as the rest of the university; we have a jury composed of people from the school and professionals from outside. The students are all present and the screenings are open to the public. Every student presents a film and we talk about that film for 20 minutes and after that there's a debate and a discussion. And we have a diary or a thesis, which is a work in progress as while shooting or working. It could be more about aesthetics or technique but it is about how you dealt with the shooting or this project in the making, all the steps, all the different stages up to the screening. After that the jury gather for a discussion. They have very vivid discussions at times and each one of them gives a separate mark.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: Do your students have a tutor for the respective projects? Is there a professor who is responsible for the project?

Jean-Louis Dufour: It is very important. It is really part of the system.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: What is the role of this professor in the final graduation moment?

Jean-Louis Dufour: The role of the tutor is more important at the beginning in the school because the student gets more and more autonomous, as he proceeds. The tutor can help find somebody to co-produce the film, if necessary. But even if each student chooses a specific tutor, he will also go to other teachers or other professionals to talk about his film. For instance, if the student specializes in documentary film, and he wants to direct a feature film, he will see other professors or other professionals who will also help him in this particular area. We say that the tutor is here to accompany the student, walk along with him, but also sometimes walk a bit far ahead.

Frédéric Papon: In La Femis, as I said before, we have two directors for each department and they will tutor the project for each student. But there's also a possibility to have a kind of godfather, a kind of advisor. They choose it outside the school and this person is not in the jury in the end. The advisor can assist the student during the development but he is not part of the jury.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I asked the question about the tutors because for example at our school at the end the tutor has a very important role. He is the one who presents the student to the jury and to the audience. Our public defence is so open that you can have hundreds of people at the screening and most of these people are students or people from outside the school, for example, the actors in the film or the people who helped in the making of the film, people who are just friends or family, or even people from other universities who would like to see what is going on. And everybody can ask whatever questions they have and everybody can say what they want to say. This all begins with the advisor who stands up in front and says: this is my student and we worked on the project for one or two years and our tasks were as follows and we wanted to make that, we probably succeeded in this and we didn't succeed in that. And before we go to the questions and the answers, the student will have to explain himself what he wanted to do. And then we have somebody else, who we call the opponent. He writes three, or four or five pages review of the film and this person is a professor at the school. This is a qualified professor who could say good or bad things about the film, or just present a balanced review of good things and bad things. And then the student has the opportunity to answer the questions, and maybe express his or her opinion, and then the Q&A session starts. But the advisor is with the student all the time on the stage.

Frédéric Papon: Well, there's no stage. But the tutor – for us it is the director of the department – is in the jury, with the student. But the student speaks first, before the three persons in the jury coming

from outside the school. The last person who speaks is Mark as he is the president of the jury and before him the two directors of the department speak. Because these two professionals have known the students from the very beginning they can speak about the four years. It is not interesting to speak only about the last work. It is interesting to know how the student performed at the beginning of his or her studies and how he or she is doing now. Has the school changed something for the student?

Elena Rusinova: How does the invitation of external people affect the future of our students? Does it help them in any way to find their place in real production world? Or is it just an objective point of view at graduation?

Marc Nicolas: It is certainly not the moment to get a job. And we choose the jury on the basis of criteria which have nothing to do with finding a job. First, the persons on the jury can't be alumni for the reasons mentioned, I don't want people from the school to come and comment on the school. The jury is mainly a moment for the student to get an evaluation of his or her last year work. And for us this is a moment of evaluation of us as a department and as a school. That's why we always choose three people who have never before taught at the school. They must be brand new and give us an opinion of what they have seen.

Bert Beyens: We cannot go that far because we are too small as a country and a community and too many of the people there are alumni. We try to balance that but in France you can do that.

Marc Nicolas: It is difficult for us too. Sometimes we take somebody who was a student 25 years ago so that he/she is far from the school.

Bert Beyens: You really need to have the budget to have people like this as part of a jury.

Jan Nâls: I have a question to Frédéric. You mentioned the written part of the thesis which sounded quite extensive. What is the role of the thesis in that assessment? What percentage of the overall evaluation does it take and how is this percentage calculated? I am curious to know.

Frédéric Papon: It is part of the evaluation in the end. It takes half of the discussion with the student in the jury. Everybody in the jury has a copy of the thesis which we sent several weeks before and everybody has read it. And they discuss it, especially the part devoted to the sound and image. The first part of the discussion is the thesis. The film is just an illustration. And when it is not an illustration, this turns out to be the subject of the discussion. That's the beginning of the problem.

Marc Nicolas: I took part in a cinematography exam and the thesis was about sunset. What do you do during this half an hour when this happens? So, the student made a written work on sunset in cinema history, putting a special focus on American cinema of the last 25 years. And he made a film which is short fiction film, entirely placed in sunset. And in his written text he also speaks of his own film. So, it is a mix of a walk in cinema history, and something about his film and the problem he had shooting sunset with an Alexa specifically. His own film was also about sunset. It was a mix of all that.

Mieke Bernink: I have a very simple question which is "Can students fail?" It is such a complicated thing. It is the last thing you do at a school. As somebody said how can you succeed, how can you pass if you cannot fail? For example, at our school, you can't really fail your diploma work because it upsets the whole system in a way.

Frédéric Papon: For me it is simple. If they could fail, they don't go to the jury. We must see the work

before, we must speak before, we must work together before because it is not a failure of the student, it is our failure, so we don't want to fail.

John Burgan: Just a brief thought based on the presentation I gave at the beginning of the conference. I raised this question how to reward failure and I think we are all very familiar with this instance that students' application films to film schools are very individual, spiky, and technically not always great but there's something definitely there. People come out at the other end of three years making very professionally looking films where every department has polished everything perfectly and they are all very dull. So, it's back to the fundamental question how do we reward failure. I would really prefer somebody who has tried something that doesn't really work, like an interesting failure to a dull made piece of television film.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: I think you are right. This is something that we need to address beforehand. I think that if you let a student to that point of making a diploma film and it is really not what it should be, you have failed, the school has failed, you know.

Mieke Bernink: It would be difficult for the films that are made in a collective. We may say that the film is ok, but the particular work of a particular student, say sound or something, is not very good. Then you still say that the student doesn't go up for the final exam.

Su Nicholls-Gärtner: We have the same thing at the school, once they get to that point; they have got to go through to the end of it. There's a lot of discussion and it is really hard on the students to be in that position in the end. But for me, if it is a director who hasn't been able to hear input and the editors had to deal with that, I don't have a big problem with that because it's like they are learning so much through that experience and maybe it is also nice to be at the end of the programme but I know they are learning, the curve is huge.

Marc Nicolas: All the students present two works – their own diploma work that Frédéric described and the one of a director in which they took part. So, in fact there is a double discussion within the jury concerning the two works and you can take into account what you were saying.

Andreas Gruber: For us the main thing is the diploma film. We say it is the entrance to the industry, it isn't. It is very open what the students can do. A lot of students now are making diploma films, feature films of 90 minutes in collaboration with TV stations already. So, it is very interesting and there are two kinds of diplomas. One of the types has a jury and it is open to all members of the school to come and watch it and the discussion takes place in the group of the jury and after 20 minutes the student gets the results. But there is a second kind of unofficial diploma, as we call it, and it is in the two-day screenings. There is a screening for two days of all the diploma films and the best films – this is all for producers, TV persons, for the whole industry. And there they present their films and it is very, very interesting what kinds of talks and discussions come up there and it is more important sometimes than the diploma.

Bert Beyens: In the Flemish speaking part of Belgium all the graduation films will be presented at the Short Film Festival in Leuven. And the Flemish Fund would give two wild cards for fiction and three for documentary but a Wildcard for fiction is something like 60,000 €. So, they really look forward to that. Like Hans von Neufeld who won with *Oxygen*, he had the first Wildcard in 2005. He graduated in 2005 from the school. The ones who got the Wildcard, they almost all have done their first feature and are very active now. But that's the transition to the profession.

Jean-Louis Dufour: The student presents his film, because the tutor has decided and considered that

his work is finished and could be screened. Otherwise he or she wouldn't present the film and this would take another year.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I really want to know what is your way of dealing with mediocre students, average students, below average students, that are just creeping to the final moment? I believe we all have such students – they fail through every exercise in the process, but we give them a chance and they complete it, and then they fail again in the next one, and so on until they finally come to the diploma stage. What do we do with those students, how do we deal with them, do we really want them to get a diploma from our school? Are we really happy that they are our students and that we are signing that diploma?

Margot Ricard: We have an expression for those students. We call them “tourists”. When they become “tourists” for the second time, the pressure of the group is so big on them that they have to succeed or leave. For us in TV and cinema in Quebec, it is very tough to fail. Because sometimes we can put a very low mark on a specific course, but to fail it is almost impossible. The most difficult thing is to enter the school. When they enter the school they feel so privileged that except for one “tourist” once in a while, they really try to succeed and they work for it.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: See, in our school it is the same. In our case it is very difficult to enter the school but in the end, once you are there, you graduate, unless you yourself decide to leave the school. In our school at least, and if this is not the case in your schools I would like you to speak because I would like to hear other opinions. I think that one of the problems here is that the diplomas of our schools, I don't know maybe this is not true, are not so important in the industry. Nobody really cares if you have an A in the diploma or an F, or if you have a diploma at all. Because you can be a director, a scriptwriter and so on, without never attending a film school. You can be everybody in the industry without having attended a film school.

Margot Ricard: If you have on your resume the fact that you have graduated from a prestigious film school it is not enough to have a job. Even if it is the reputation of UQAM or Concordia.

Bert Beyens: This is why I am scared to death with all the PhDs in arts education because a diploma counts if you have a statutory fixed position in the industry. But the diploma is a very relative thing in art. In education it is necessary but in art it really doesn't matter. If you are an actor or if you shoot a movie, it has no importance.

Margot Ricard: This summer I had to find a DP. It was a student of Michele Garrôt from our school and I said “Oh, it is better to have him than someone you don't know”. You see, it gives you an idea. If we don't believe in our diplomas, why do we work in a film school?

Bert Beyens: The funny thing is that sometimes very good students after three years say that they are working and they leave the school and they don't want to do the master's. I regret that because I would like them to be officially on our list.

Lubomir Halachev: I have a proposal. Marc, maybe we can run the next conference under the title of how to deal with bad students, because we all know what to do with the good ones. The bad students are the problem. So maybe we have to resolve the problem in some way at the next conference.

Mieke Bernink: Just one thing. Under Dutch educational law after the first year of the studies you can actually tell people to go. You are no longer allowed to do that in the year two, three and four,

but you are allowed to do that at the end of the first year. So that is where quite a lot of students have to go if they are not good enough. If they fail three exams in a row for the same exam, perhaps that's also a reason for them to have to leave the school, but other than that it is very difficult.

Gisli Snaer: John and I we have to work under the guidance of QAA in England and they dictate that every student has two chances of fail to repeat. So unless they have failed twice, there's nothing we can do. It is literally dictated by the Audit Board in England. It is called "intermission" and then they can apply again to repeat a semester but they can do that only twice. However, they are discussing to maybe give them a chance to do it three times. That has to do with the question of the whole idea of education. We cater for the bad ones. Literally, the quality of the work has dropped and the good ones actually lost interest in doing anything and we lost two students who thought that we are catering for those who were not interested, which is rather odd, if you go to a school paying a huge amount of money. But this year we completely shifted in all classes the focus on the good ones and those who would fall off the wagon would fall off the wagon and so be it.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: While listening to you I begin to feel happy being in Bulgaria. I think that we may talk about diploma assessment for longer but we are at the end of this discussion and would like to give the floor to Mark for the final wrap up of this conference and then I will just add a few matters related to organization in the end.

Marc Nicolas: I lost the diploma thing because there was something we were talking about in different interventions. The diploma thing is very complex and it is very important in our school. Almost all students in our school have the diploma but it still remains something very important. And I must say I am cultivating the fact that it is important. There is a small ritual, a small ceremony because it is really the last time and it is the first time when a student hears something about his or her work that we have been saying for four years. And because of this particular occasion something happens that makes the student realize what we have been speaking about for so many times. And I think this is related to the fact that it is a ritual, it is something that happens only once. And that is the end. So, symbolically and really the day after, they are no more students. I think that this fact plays an educational role. This was a detail.

It is a heavy burden that you gave me to conclude. I don't want to conclude. I just want to say first, thank you to NATFA for organising this conference, to Lubo and his team. All people who organise such conferences know that it's hard work. Concerning the conference itself I think that we are all frustrated as always by the fact that many questions were raised and were not sufficiently worked out during our meeting but it always happens, at all our conferences, so, it is part of the challenge. Maybe it also reminds us that we must regularly insist on introducing papers which are structured as much as possible. This is important because it helps us in our debates. We had the maximum of participants who managed to express themselves and it was a little loud but not much. So thank you for this atmosphere of the conference. And probably we have to conclude at separate discussions the subject itself. During the debate we also had different subjects that could be taken as subjects for next conferences. For instance, the admission process. I know that many of you had the impression on the first day that what was made ten or twelve years ago which was to dedicate the entire conference on this question, could happen again because many people were not there and it is an important question that comes every year for all of us as a new question in fact. We actually have many, many conference subjects. So, thank you all for this wonderful conference that opens place for the future.

Stanislav Semerdjiev: I was wearing my hat as a professor at NATFA these two days but now I put my other hat as CILECT Executive Director. I had a very long Skype conversation with our President Maria

Dora Mourão yesterday and I informed her how this conference was going on and she sends her best regards to all of you, and of course her apologies of not being able to be here. But she has to be at another conference just two weeks from now in Brisbane in Australia which is a CAPA conference on post-production. This is actually the third edition of that conference. It started in 2010 as a GEECT event at the National Film and Television School at Beaconsfield in the UK and then last year it was held in Sao Paulo in Brazil under the CILECT President's auspices and now we are doing a third edition because it was so good in its first edition that it became a traveling showcase.

And now I would like to underline something not because Marc is here, as I have said that many times when he was not present. But on the other hand, it is good that he is here because it is always nice to say good things about people when they are present. This GEECT format of conferences started when Marc became the Chair of GEECT. In the CILECT Executive Council we are very positive about this type of development of the regions and the conferences that happen now at CAPA and CIBA are actually based on the model of the GEECT conferences. GEECT in the last six or seven years has changed completely and we should be thankful to Marc and the board of GEECT for that. Thanks again to everybody from NATFA who made this conference possible. I am happy that what we started together has such a good ending. And finally, thank you to all the participants for taking the time to attend, to be active and to share important information and knowledge.