



**ENTERTAINMENT,  
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# Foreword



**Rahul Puri,**  
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*One of the primary responsibilities of any institution is to share its knowledge. As educational institutions expand, they accumulate a vast repository of insights into their specialized fields and their interactions with various stakeholders within society, such as industry, government, and public organizations. However, the challenge persists that unless individuals engage with the institution, either through pursuing an educational degree, forming partnerships, or securing employment, it becomes challenging to disseminate this knowledge base in a meaningful and relevant manner.*

*This issue is particularly pronounced in the domain of Media and Entertainment. In India, there are limited institutions focused solely on Media and Entertainment, and even within the industry, there is a scarcity of publications that share knowledge bases. A few reports and organizations exist, but they often originate from individuals outside the industry and may not fully capture the comprehensive perspectives from the industry as a whole.*

*Thus, we at Whistling Woods International have decided to attempt to bring some of our inherited and accumulated knowledge base out in a bi-annual publication. This publication would allow many of our faculty members, who have been experienced educators or professionals in their field, to bring out some of the key perspectives, applications, and ideas they have learned through their work on topics from the industry itself to teaching societal issues such as technological change, shifts in culture, and the nature of entertainment. This will be done through a series of essays and articles that provoke and question as well as outline solutions and possible paths to a new status quo. At this stage, these are not full research pieces. However, they very much could morph into that, and we will pursue that with the author as well.*

*For our inaugural issue, we have placed a strong emphasis on pedagogy, featuring contributions from various faculty members across the Whistling Woods campus. Milindo Taid, Head of the School of Design, challenges conventional Design education pedagogy. Sabyasachi Bose, Head of Production Design in the School of Filmmaking, explores the potential integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the curriculum of Production Design. Vivek Nag, Head of the School of Animation, draws insights from a recent student-led 48-hour Hackathon that can be applied to*

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*Animation innovation. Vivian Pimenta, Editing faculty in the School of Filmmaking, examines the impact of Academic Affiliations on Film School pedagogy. Shankar Lakshmanan, faculty of the School of Music, explores the significance of mentorship in a technologically driven world.*

*I am immensely proud of the work accomplished by our faculty and delighted that Whistling Woods has taken this initiative. I'd also like to acknowledge the work done by faculty who helped with the initial drafts -*

*Anuj Gulati, Jewellyn Alvares, Saloni Shukla, and Sudipto Acharyya as well as Utkarsha Kotian and Tejasvini Ahuja who oversaw the final edits of the articles. I anticipate further contributions that will contribute to the discourse within the Media and Entertainment Industry and beyond regarding the role of education and its implications in an interconnected world. These contributions will undoubtedly be passed on to the next generation, ensuring that they are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern era.*

# Challenging The Traditional: Bauhaus, Black Mountain and the Pedagogy of Experimentation in Art and Design



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## ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the politics, and the relevance of the pedagogy of experimentation in art and design education, most prominently articulated in the oppositional tensions buried in the pedagogic practices of two 20th C foundational and influential centres of design education – the Bauhaus (1919-1933) in Germany and Black Mountain College (1933-1957) in the USA. Every design school in the world, including those in India, owes its pedagogic blueprint to this transatlantic dialogue, to the interrogation of, and the subsequent radical opposition to, all forms of limitations posed by tradition as generally identified in educational processes.

Incorporating the specifics of this pedagogy of experimentation and opposition, this study demonstrates the vitality and importance of the politics of interrogation for fostering far reaching innovation via multi-pronged

creative endeavours within the realm of art and design. A status quo is antithetical to the essential idea of inventiveness in the future leaning area of practice, within which design is deeply situated.

**Keywords:** *art and design education, avant garde, design for change, pedagogic politics, experimentation.*



*“To know the land, you have to walk the land”* – Dashrath Patel (Artist, Designer, Design Educator, 1927-2010) – in an interaction with students of design, at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India. February, 2000.

## PHILOSOPHICAL BEARINGS: EXPERIENCE, RESISTANCE AND RENEWAL

The core emphasis on experiential learning environments for design education, [buoyed by American pedagogic philosopher John Dewey’s framing of progressive education as *“a product of discontent with traditional education”* and his reiteration of education and art as *“human experience”* (Dewey, 1938)], posits a two-pronged approach to addressing the problematics in art and design education. The first instance is oppositional in its intent, the rallying cry against the perceived stiffness of the class interest led, prescribed, handed down subject matter, methods, and standards – the dull drudgery of rote ‘learning’ and its associated systems of assessments and evaluations – that which necessarily injects competition as a value among the learners, with clear routes to individual rewards and punishment. The other instance is directly and deeply aligned with the craft origins of design, markers of which are, (but not limited to,) learning by doing and making, social learning, experimentation, exploration, apprenticeship, and mentorship – that which necessarily injects self-improvement and self-actualization as a value in the learning community, where mistakes and errors are tolerated, accepted, and encouraged as opportunities of learning.

Design is an area of practice and a category of service, a practice that engenders problem solving interventions centred on people. It is one of the oldest human abilities, and one of the newest professions. While being a transformative and a powerful force that emphatically shapes and sculpts society and culture, Design and Design education is largely, and commonly poorly understood in India, as activities that involve ‘decoration,’ ‘dress making,’ and ‘colouring,’ – of that which

comes after, almost as an afterthought. This commonly arrived at stance and perception of limited possibilities is dubbed the *“selective tradition”* by Welsh cultural theorist Raymond Williams, when he says, *“the way in which from a whole possible arena of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded.”* (Williams, 1974.) This manner of the selective screening of idioms of cultural transmission and areas of historical interest greatly impacts the ebb and flow of cultural and societal change, along with its meaning making framework. Post independent India, seduced by the age of reason, and the promise of science, technology, and medicine, is still waking up to the potential of Design and Design education.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, argued that the established, deep rooted structures of education, necessarily mirror, reflect, and enforce dominant cultural values, leading very often to the legitimization of ideologies married to class interests (Bourdieu, 1977.) Craft and craft practice and the material culture that it produces, though ancient, was, and is, largely moored to the notion of utility – ceaseless and quotidian, the meeting of everyday human needs. Perceivably, not elevated high culture. Importantly also, craft calls for the doing and making by hands, with very little by way of aid by sophisticated tools, mostly depending on the dexterity of nimble, seasoned fingers. The perceived separation of the hand and mind becomes quite striking – manual art & craft, thinking science & technology.

Along the course of the emergence of Design

as a profession in the 20th century, the doing of design vis a vis the thinking of the doing of design marked another kind of separation of the hand and the mind, so much so, that a 21st century designer will be almost unrecognizable as one, in any previous era. The contemporary designer imagines, conceives, innovates, invents (the thinking of it all,) while the final making very often rests on individuals and groups outside of the designer's domain. The industrial working force borne out of the age of the machine, continues to inhabit a world marked by radical instability – the forces of late capitalist relations of mass production and consumption, engaged in various provisions of volatile interdependence. French philosopher Louis Althusser (1979), in contemplating about historical change, wrote

emphatically about the need to “*think the openness of the world to the event, [to] the as-yet-unimaginable.*”

It took two distinct experimental pedagogical environments to conceive this ‘as-yet-unimaginable,’ this ‘openness of the world to the event.’ Responding to the zeitgeist of the promise of the new age of the machine and mass production, and the large-scale tectonic shifts in the organization and reorganization of society and culture that it seeded, the Bauhaus (1919-1933) in Germany and Black Mountain College (1933-1957) in the USA, marks a continuum of spirit, of four decades of the interrogation of the traditional, and the celebration of the experimental.

### **BAUHAUS: ‘THE WORLD AS-YET-IMAGINED’ – THE BIRTHING OF THE MODERN, AND THE INDUSTRIAL AVANT-GARDE.**

*Gesamtkunstwerk*, or the “cathedral of the future” is how the founder Director of the Bauhaus (House of Building), architect Walter Gropius described the ‘unified work of art, craft, architecture and industry’ – the call to path-find new directions for an industrial society, by dissolving the traditional boundaries of all the arts and crafts, in the service of industrial mass manufacturing, for the rejuvenation of a post war Germany. This vision of the synthesis of technical and artistic production, necessitated by the monumental changes unleashed by the onset of the first Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, led to the creation of a pedagogic environment that continues to define design education, a century later, to this day.

Enthused by a visionary idealism, the Bauhaus spirit (used almost synonymously with ‘Modernism’) sought a distinct break from the past, in artistic and pedagogic practices, throughout its period of existence from 1919-1933, across the three locations of Weimar, Dessau and Berlin. The 1919 Bauhaus manifesto inked by Gropius strongly put forth

ideas of “*avoidance of all things stiff*” and “*freedom to individuality*” – a call that would be answered by a diverse group of architects, artisans and artists who became teachers at the Bauhaus. In favouring creative and individual freedoms, the Bauhaus seeded a community of faculty and students who could inhabit the cutting edge of pedagogic and artistic ‘avant-garde’ – questioning was encouraged and enabled by a unified aspiration, the Bauhaus community attempted to engage with the potential solutions to society’s cultural and social problems. Leaning into design production, the teachers of the Bauhaus innovated teaching methods and modes of learning, while deploying ‘the experiment’ as a key force in developing and unlocking creative skills, along with theoretical training informing practical applications in the famed Workshops.

Although unified in aspirations in this ‘cathedral of the future,’ the Bauhaus pedagogic experiment was by no means easy. This complex community of architects, artisans, artists, teachers, learners - in

attempting to invent the future, had to contend with a wide diversity of political affiliations of groups and individuals, differing ideological 'world views', as well as religious orientations. All this compounded by the fact that the years of the existence of the Bauhaus, also marked years of extreme social, economic and political fissures in Germany, which ultimately led to its subsequent decline.

One of the most important pedagogic achievements of the Bauhaus, was the Basic Course (also called Preliminary or Preparatory course,) also known as the Foundation course in India and elsewhere in the world. It was first conceived of as a basic course for Design by Swiss artist, designer, Bauhaus faculty Johannes Itten, and in his remarkable book 'Die Kunst der Farbe' (The Art of Colour) in describing the Foundation course of Design and Form, he speaks of a carriage that is aided in making its way, easily enough, along a paved path, and when the paved path comes to an end, the one who is making the journey must dismount and find one's independent way on foot. The Basic Course on Design and Form was expected to enable, aid and guide, till such time the student can find one's way with a distinct artistic vision and voice. Students entering the Bauhaus, had to successfully complete the Basic course before they could move on to the more intensive later year Workshops. Learners hailing from diverse scholastic and economic backgrounds, had the opportunity (and importantly, the freedom) to test themselves if they have a leaning to a material, medium or a particular workshop.

In provoking imagination and creativity, the Basic Course involved experimental, informal modules on Chiaroscuro (light-shadow,) the theory of Colours, Materials and Texture studies, the Theory and Practice of Forms, Rhythm, Expressive and Subjective Forms, Calligraphy, Figure Study, Natural Science, Descriptive Geometry among others. Another vital component, that was oppositional to traditional education, were the qualities of

collaboration and cooperation fostered in the students, instead of them competing. This was also preparatory for the later workshop interdisciplinary projects, in which active, efficient teamwork was an essential requirement. The Bauhaus Basic Course founded by Itten, was later led by other Bauhaus faculty and luminaries of the 20th century Modern in art and design – Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Oskar Schlemmer and Joost Schmidt. The seeds of Bauhaus modernism were planted in India, with Rabindranath Tagore's visit to the Bauhaus, Weimar in 1921, and the subsequent exhibition of Bauhaus work (including that of Itten, Kandinsky and Klee) in Calcutta, in 1922 (Mitter, 2015.)

The Workshops pedagogic framework of the Bauhaus provided the arena for the application of art and design innovation to industrial production – a creative art and design 'proof of concept' laboratory. The Workshops encouraged experimentation, rigour and vitality while engaging with a spectrum of art, craft and architectural practices – pottery, weaving, book binding, stained glass painting, graphic printing, typography, printing and advertising, mural painting, stone sculpting, wood carving, carpentry and furniture making, metal work, theatre, architecture and building, photography, and fine arts.

The global and far-reaching impact that the Bauhaus has had on pedagogy, art and design, and architecture and indeed on the totality of the built environment and what it means to be Modern, cannot be overemphasized. With its emphasis on human experience, collective ideas and efforts, experiments, and the voicing of a distinct departure from the past – all contributing to the forging of a radicalism by which it sought to address the pressing challenges of post war industrial culture and society. With the ascendancy of national socialism and the Nazi party in Germany, the Bauhaus ultimately shut its doors for the final time in 1933. If the

'Fraktur' lettering and typeface stood for German nationalist identity, and later the Nazi identity, the Bauhaus spirit created typefaces that were antithetical to that very identity – the political roots of the Bauhaus are undeniable. The 'demise' of the Bauhaus in Germany, led to the dispersal of Bauhaus

students and faculty to shores afar – and among other places of art and design pedagogy, it seeded the remarkable Black Mountain College in the USA, primarily with the arrival of the wife and husband duo of Anni and Josef Albers.

### BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE: 'THE WORLD AS-YET-IMAGINED' – DEMOCRATIZATION OF DESIGN, EXPERIMENT AS METHOD

Anni and Josef Albers were Bauhaus alumni who later became influential members of faculty at the Bauhaus. Anni, a textile designer and a student of Klee, made noteworthy contributions to the design of modernist textile, and her husband Josef, a painter, rose to become a central figure in 20th century colour theory, perception, and application. The Albers were exiles from Nazi Germany, and they placed themselves in the heart of another radical pedagogic experiment, far from Germany, in the outskirts of a small mountain town in North Carolina, USA.

1933- the year of closure of the Bauhaus is the year of inception of the Black Mountain College, a striking coincidence perhaps, marking the continuum of a unified aspiration in new ways of questioning, living, thinking, and making. Founded through the initiatives of American literary scholar and educator John Andrew Rice and his colleagues who were united in their vision of liberal arts higher education based on democratic values and principles of liberty. "I want to open eyes" is what Josef Albers apparently voiced, on reaching Black Mountain, where the educational philosophy was infused with the spirit of radical experimentation. One of the primary stated aims of the College was to "educate a student as a person and as a citizen", echoing the socio-political-cultural project of the Bauhaus.

Influential pedagogic philosopher John Dewey

was appointed to the Board of Advisors of Black Mountain, and through the decade of the 1930s he made quite a few visits to the college which discarded all traditional hierarchies of function and role, so adamantly adhered to by the higher education establishments of the time. Dewey makes a rather telling comment when he observes that Black Mountain was "a living example of democracy in action.." (Dewey, 1940.) While centring community and social learning, not unlike the Bauhaus, Black Mountain went a step further in dismantling all role demarcations in the college - the divisions between faculty, students, administrators, in creating a lived vision of an alternate and possible way of structuring higher education for art and design. Furthering its oppositional stance, it did away with publishing of grades of students – the message was clear, students are not competing.

At the core of any community, social, collective learning system is a shared vision and belief in finding new, alternative ways of forging a better society, and not just better 'standards of living' as defined in the machine age. In a 1938 college bulletin, Anni Albers urges the Black Mountain community to "...leave the safe ground of accepted conventions." The winds of radical innovation blew through Black Mountain to fire the inventive spirits, of not only the Albers, but of other prominent 20th century art and design figures – in the faculty, Buckminster Fuller (architecture and design), John Cage (music)

Merce Cunningham (dance,) Willem de Kooning (painting) among others, and in the student body, the likes of Kenneth Noland (painting) and Cy Twombly (painting and sculpture) among others.

The Dewey espoused social learning spurred Black Mountain into active interdisciplinary exchanges and collaborative art and design practices, leading to work that continuously pushed at the edges of the artistic avant-garde, not unlike the earlier Bauhaus experience. Novel thought and action followed, with the disciplinary boundaries shifting and realigning in imaginative ways – environmental design with visual art, ‘noise-verse’ with melodic music, architecture opening up to new possibilities for communities as well as individuals. Cultural and political progress was a desirable. Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic domes, Cages’s chance-based music, and the monochromatic painting of Josef Albers are gifts to the world. Disciplinary boundaries, in pedagogies

sculpted by a certain ideological inclination, remain in a state of continuous interrogation, the underlying assumptions governing the separation of disciplinary pursuits rest on contested terrain, subject to realignment.

The Black Mountain students and faculty (although viewed with a hint of suspicion by the local rural folk surrounding the campus,) made outreach activities a part of the campus way of being. They reached out to the immediate rural community by way of art education in schools, organizing exhibitions, and helping stage plays, and initiating radio programming as well. The political, social and economic realities, far removed in place and time from the Bauhaus years in Germany, yielded an arena for more active engagement of Black Mountain students with the local communities – the Bauhaus relationship with the communities in Weimar and Dessau were less cordial, a result of the then strained socio-political fabric.

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD: VALUE, IDEOLOGY AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Ideological and political underpinnings of both the Bauhaus and the Black Mountain projects triggered pedagogic experiments unlike any other in the 20th century, and the ripples of both persist, a century on. At the heart of both were socially conscious affirmative visions of liberty and fraternity, harbouring a zeal to carve out better societies and citizens through artistic practice and design endeavours of a wide-ranging spectrum. The Bauhaus and Black Mountain learning communities rallied against fracturing tendencies – in the academic-disciplinary arena, as well as the socio-cultural and political one. Multidisciplinary gave way to interdisciplinary, and intolerant forces (racial segregation for Black Mountain and national socialism for Bauhaus) were engaged with, with the intention of overcoming those very

intolerances. The stepping away from the road trodden on, was as decisive as it was visionary, for the creative inventive spirit resides in learning communities that embrace new ways of conceiving and imagining how the world might be. To forge the better future, there is no reliance on a blueprint or a compass, but rather a collective, socially conscious creative leap into the unknown, fuelled by a deep conviction that by challenging the traditional, and by probing the limitations of human imagination via experimentation and abductive thinking, the learning community will, finally, change the world.

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# Revisiting Production Design Curriculum in the Wake of AI<sup>1</sup>



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## SOME CLARIFICATIONS:

To start with, let me clarify first, which aspects of the production design curriculum would not be discussed in this paper. Firstly, the purely theoretical aspect of production design and secondly, the collective aspect of a Production Designer's job would never be explored here. Definitely, it's not because these aspects are less worthy to discuss rather, it's quite contrary. Let me explain, here I would concentrate solely on the curriculum of the third semester from the total four semesters of 'MA Course'<sup>2</sup>, while clearly these aspects deserve to be spread over the entire curriculum consisting three specialization semesters.

Now, I should state my objectives, firstly, I would argue that it's the 'Visualization tasks' which should be considered as the primary contribution of a Production Designer as a creative head towards any moviemaking project; secondly, through a process of continuous improvisations, I would figure out an appropriate methodology to teach these visualization tasks; thirdly, I would explore the broader possibilities of the final methodology; and fourthly, as a conclusion, I would share my

observations about the probable implications of these possibilities to inform the nature of pedagogical engagement with 'AI technology' in relation to the overall production design curriculum, perhaps, not in a too distant future.



## DEFINING THE MAINSTAY OF THE PRODUCTION DESIGN CURRICULUM

Before advancing further, probably, we might ask, 'Which could be considered as the main tasks for a Production Designer in moviemaking industry?'<sup>3</sup> To get a correct answer to this query perhaps, we might explore the tasks of a Production Designer and then proceed to identify the primary tasks from those different tasks.

Ideally, the tasks expected from a Production Designer would involve, 'reading the script, and determining "The Look" of the given moviemaking project in collaboration with the Director and the DOP; doing research; doing script breakdown to decide the total numbers of shooting zones whether they would be on real location or on soundstage; producing budget estimation; helping the DOP and the Director in deciding the color palette; bringing an Art Director onboard, putting up the Art Department and delegating the workload accordingly; scouting to choose the correct locations; guiding the visualization process to show the shooting zone/s with or without set; supervising set designing; supervising the execution of 3D model/s to show the final set/s; overseeing the set construction process; delivering the dressed up set/s and/or shooting zone/s within the given time and budget; taking responsibility to manage the set/s and/or shooting zone/s during the principal photography; taking responsibility to dismantle the set/s; making suitable rigs when required; and finally, making scaled-down miniature set to shoot afterwards'. Moreover, a Production Designer might also be expected to work in tandem with 'Costume Designer, Make-up Artist, SFX and VFX Personnel' to maintain the determined 'Look' in the entire movie.

Now, for the ease of convenience, we might narrow down the above list of tasks. 'Bringing an Art Director, putting up the Art Department, delegating the tasks among the Art Department personnel, making 3D model

before the final set/s, managing set during the shooting period, dismantling set/s, even working with other head personnel like Costume Designer, Make-up Artist, SFX and VFX personnel' - with all due respects to the relevance of these tasks, probably we might consider these tasks as comparatively minor for their being by nature, kind of managerial tasks, or, at maximum, as in the cases of executing 3D model, constructing miniature set, and making rigs, kind of supplementary tasks because of their foundational dependence on other tasks. Whereas the remaining works, might be considered as the major tasks for a Production Designer simply due to their roles as the fundamental components in the overall designing process, and without whose presence the production design contributions towards a given project could not take place at all.

Here, it seems to be that we might further organize these tasks in three categories only. 'Planning' tasks, 'Construction' tasks and 'Visualization' tasks. Let's define these tasks first and then discuss the comparative merits of these three categories of tasks.

We must add here that despite an important task why 'location choice' could not be included in any one of these three categories of tasks. Simply, because of its being a common factor in all these categories<sup>4</sup>. Likewise, the tasks of 'reading the script' and 'doing research' also omitted here, because both of these tasks might be too foundational to all the design activities to be included in a single category.

### Planning:

In 'Planning', the script breakdown<sup>5</sup> task provides a Production Designer with all the information necessary to determine the total numbers of shooting zones with or without set and consequent budget estimation before she/he/they starts guiding the process of

visualizations.

### **Construction:**

This category denotes 'the broader aspect of set construction' which means, 'constructing a fully dressed up set' - which is generally considered as the primary task for a Production Designer<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, in comparison to others, set construction requires largest share of resources to execute.

### **Visualization:**

Here, 'The Look' would be determined and subsequently, color palette would be decided. 'The Look' generally provides the necessary contour to the visualizing process and visualizations as the outcome of this process shows the future shooting zones with or without set in such a manner that they could be executed practically within a stipulated budget and time period. Afterwards, taking cue from these visualizations, set designs might be produced.

At a whole, it seems to be that 'Planning' might be the most necessary category of

tasks because nothing worthwhile could be achieved here without scheduling and budgeting. Whereas by attracting the largest share of the allotted budget, the 'Construction' tasks seem to prove beyond doubt its preeminent position among the given categories of tasks. Still, if we study inter-relationship of these categories more closely, we might realize that the 'Visualization' tasks act as the fountainhead, whereas 'Construction' tasks would be the practical manifestation of this fountainhead, and 'Planning' tasks would be there to facilitate this manifestation to take place without any hindrance.

After identifying 'Visualization' as the fundamental tasks as such for a Production Designer as a creative head in any moviemaking project, as academics responsible to teach production design we might raise another pertinent question, 'What might be the best way to teach this "Visualization" category of tasks to the production design students?'

## ■ IN SEARCH FOR A CORRECT METHODOLOGY

### **First improvisation:**

In this methodology, the 'Look' might be taught in a manner closer to the general 'film appreciation' course, nevertheless the emphasis would be on the décor aspect of the given movies rather. The process of visualizing and the usage of color might be taught in a way similar to the one mostly followed at the Art Institutions, where students learn perspective drawing, tonal values of colors and relevant computer software. Set designing might be taught following the general teaching method of the Architectural Institutions.

The main problem in this methodology would be that all the exercises end on producing ultimately two-dimensional images. Also, in the absence of a binding reference element

the whole process and in consequence, the entire learning experiences might appear to the students rather mechanical, and in time, more and more demotivating.

### **Second improvisation:**

Here, we might add what was missing in the first improvisation while keeping all the other teachings intact. That means, there would be a three-dimensional construction instead of two-dimensional image making as the final outcome of the given visualizing exercises.

Now, we need to clarify what would be the form of this three-dimensional construction? The simple answer might be a 'set' facilitating opportunities for conducting all those visualizing exercises. Still, the problem would be the feasibility of constructing such a set

with suitable qualities because it would require comparatively a larger resource in terms of materials, labor and studio space.

Regarding the binding reference element, probably we might consider a screenplay which would connect all the exercises as the small parts of a bigger endeavor to bring a sense of purposefulness to the whole process. Nevertheless, the use of a screenplay as the binding reference might inadvertently encourages an expectation to shoot this screenplay on the constructed space. In a moviemaking institute, organizing shooting itself might not pose that many difficulties but as a final objective, the shooting might take the centerstage and consequently turn the learning of the visualizing exercises - the original objective of the whole initiative, as merely of a secondary importance.

### **Third improvisation:**

To address the issues been raised in the second improvisation, here, we might make further changes, like, instead of constructing a life-size set which requires considerable resources, probably we might construct a scaled-down miniature set. Nonetheless, a lot of resources still might be necessary to create the aspired opportunities in the miniature set. About the second concern, perhaps, we might replace the screenplay with its baggage of shooting expectations, with a 'Concept' as a binding reference which would ensure that the attention would never be deviated from the visualization tasks while bringing the similar kind of purposefulness to the whole enterprise.

Even so, before taking a final decision, perhaps we need to ask what kind of concept might be relevant here? Probably, we could choose a specific location from a specific period as the binding concept. Perhaps, to avoid the problem of gathering period details which demands time consuming thorough research, we might choose a present-day location. Nevertheless, research would be needed, though it would be much simpler. Especially now, when all the available

information about almost any given location has become so easily accessible. Yet paradoxically, this very possibility of finding the reference materials so easily might pose a serious problem for the students. As all of them might end up accessing similar kind of reference materials which as constituent elements for the final visualization would be very unwelcome due to their lack in diversity.

### **Fourth improvisation:**

Here probably, we might opt for even smaller table-top version of the miniature set which would create more opportunities for all those visualizing exercises through producing more detailed set and which requires even less resources to execute.

Regarding the issue of the reference concept, students might need to sidestep the internet as the sole information provider to evade the weakness in the final visualization. Probably, we might ask a simple question, 'Besides internet, which might be the other source for gathering information about a given location?' Perhaps, we won't require to go too far to realize that 'the location' itself could be the other source here. That means, students could tour a given location to study, to gather information about it. In this case, the nature of information would be direct experience based, and so, based on their different individual experiences, every student would gather different information on their own, be it through the paintings they would produce on the site, photographs/videos they would take on the site, or/and the architectural measurements they would take from the site. There might be some overlapping, nevertheless, the diverse experiences in combination with subsequent different interpretations by the students would bound to produce distinct constituent elements. Definitely, when necessary, they could use internet to enrich these constituents.

Finally, here, students would first treat all these diverse constituent elements to create a new set of reference concepts, and second,

based on these reference concepts they would produce a table-top miniature set as the final visualization.

### IDENTIFYING THE BROADER POSSIBILITIES OF THE FINAL METHODOLOGY

If we observe the final methodology attentively, we might find that as a methodology it has underlying potentials to expose the students to three distinct possibilities with much broader reach. First, it would expose them to the possibilities of collecting reference information in different ways from their original contexts. Second, it

would sensitize them to the possibilities of these reference information as the fresh constituent elements to produce a new contextual definition without losing their respective original contextual identities. And third, it would demonstrate the students to the possibility of a practical execution of this new contextual definition at a spatial level.

### PRODUCTION DESIGNING IN THE WAKE OF AI

Any technological innovation which has the power to change our life, usually immediately followed by an awkward period of euphoric reactions. Regarding 'AI', probably, we are still in that euphoric stage. Too many arguments, too many opinions are doing rounds about its possible role in the future. Yet, it seems to be that gradually a concrete picture is emerging. Like, now we know that AI needs large amounts of data<sup>7</sup>, without which it cannot work. And for capability, it still depends on human insights<sup>8</sup>. And still now, it does not have the ability to think by itself<sup>9</sup>. It seems to be that in near future, like in the other fields, the production design discipline might need to chalk out a plan to engage with AI - to tap its immense potentials for its own benefit. Probably, we could start with identifying the tasks where Production Designers might need AI and the tasks where AI would not be required that much.

tasks like producing set design, AI might be an advantageous option, nonetheless, for conceptually heavy visualization tasks like, determining the 'Look' or, creating final 'Visualizations' etc., invariably, these tasks require complete human participations. Why it would have to be so?

To begin with it seems to be that the category of 'Planning' tasks would be the one where AI could work most. Whereas, in the 'Construction' tasks, for obvious reasons its role might be much limited in scope. Regarding the 'Visualization' tasks, when we talk about the practical execution of the visualization

### POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINAL METHODOLOGY FOR PD IN THE FUTURE ENGAGEMENT WITH AI

Here, perhaps we need to elaborate the way this methodology might facilitate the students to collect the information in different modes. That means, facilitating the environment where a student would feel encouraged to make paintings after the given location, while another might feel taking photographs or videos to documenting the same location, whereas other students might be involved in measuring the relevant structures from the site to document the local architecture style. Yet, another might be talking to a local guy to know something about the given place. And later, when the students meet each other, all of them might share information and exchange ideas with each other.

Here, perhaps we need to elaborate the way this methodology might facilitate the students to collect the information in different modes. That means, facilitating the environment where a student would feel encouraged to make paintings after the given location, while another might feel taking photographs or videos to documenting the same location, whereas other students might be involved in measuring the relevant structures from the site to document the local architecture style. Yet, another might be talking to a local guy to know something about the given place. And later, when the students meet each other, all of them might share information and exchange ideas with each other.

If we compare the way AI treats the information with the manner final methodology encourages the students to treat the information – we might see how AI grabs data without attaching any particular importance to the mode of collecting per se, against the inherent insistence of this methodology on the diversity of the modes to collect the information.

Let's get back to the second fundamental learning of the final methodology, here, the students would be expected firstly to locate the reference information correctly in the given respective context, secondly to study the individual merits of the given reference information irrespective of their contextual positioning, and thirdly to produce a new referent context using the reference information thus separated from their respective contexts while retaining their original contextual identity.

If we would like to see the direct inferences of the second fundamental learning at an applied level, we might see that after collecting the reference information from the chosen location in diverse ways, students would be expected to understand the specific values of these reference materials in relation to their respective physical surroundings, their function in the respective lifestyle of local people, etc., then they would be required to analyze these reference materials as individual elements, separated from their physical moorings or cultural aspects. Afterwards, students would be expected to use in combination these separated-from-their-context reference materials to produce new referent concept/s without forgetting ever, the respective original identity of these reference materials.

The complications involved in the above-mentioned inferences as a likely outcome of the insistence implied by the final methodology might encourage the students to consider the issue of contextual identity of the reference information before as well as after the formation of the new referent concept, and which would perhaps further bring our attention to the difference between the approach of AI and approach of this methodology to accomplish these tasks. In the case of the third fundamental learnings, the crucial tasks of the final visualizations,

based on which the entire table-top miniature set as a shooting zone would be constructed, students should be directly involved because of their prior knowledge of the respective original contexts of the constituent reference concept/s, their prior involvement in improvising of the referent concept/s to their final form, and their prior nuanced

understandings of these reference materials due to their exposure to the different distinct possibilities produced by the other students. Nonetheless, in the later execution process as has been mentioned earlier, involvement of AI under student supervision might be proved beneficial, particularly, in producing floor plan, elevation drawings, and final set design.

### ■ FINAL OBSERVATIONS

In conclusion, if we try to evaluate the merit of this final methodology, specifically in relation to AI, we might find that through this methodology, how students might get continuously exposed to the idea of multiple simultaneous possibilities against the single solution-centric functionality of AI. Probably, this insistence in the final methodology on multi-layered complexity, on contradictory pulls of different narratives, on the issue of simultaneous viewpoints might be indicating the students to comprehend these contradictions perhaps, as the core part of human nature. And which probably always

create difficulties for AI to recognize due to its limitation in understanding human nature. So, at a whole, we probably found the kernel of some pertinent ideas in this paper, which could perhaps indicate what might be done in the future regarding the issue of engaging AI in production design curriculum as well as telling us something about the way a Production Designer in future might use the advantages of AI without losing her/his/their own identity as an imaginative visualizer with a humane understanding responsible to produce décor for a given moviemaking project.

### ■ NOTES

1. Artificial Intelligence.
2. 'MA in Production Design' curriculum in 'WWI' consists four semesters while the first semester is foundation semester, remaining three semesters are specialization semesters. Among specialization semesters, the first one is allocated for learning visualization on paper and basic set construction process besides preparing the students for the collaborative workshop and subsequent short moviemaking projects. Whereas, in the third specialization semester, each student would be occupied with their respective graduation movies as a Production Designer besides completing the remaining visualization learnings using various computer software. Also, they would attend costume design workshop and make up workshop. That leaves the possibility of conducting miniature set making project as the culminating outcome of visualizing exercises, only in the second specialization semester.
3. So that putting special emphasis on these tasks later, we might build our curriculum accordingly.



4. In the category of 'Planning', due to the direct logistical implications of location choice to scheduling and estimating budget. In 'Construction' category, due to the distinct practical role of chosen location as the venue on which the shooting zone/s would be constructed. And regarding the 'Visualization' category, due to the positioning of location choice as a décor element in the overall visualization process.
5. 'Script breakdown' as a separate task has been included in the 'Planning' category due to its direct role in deciding on the numbers of locations and sets, and for its subsequent role in producing the rough budget.
6. "Set construction on a soundstage is the meat and potatoes of art direction." - 'What an Art Director Does – An Introduction to Motion Picture Production Design' by Ward Preston, SILMAN-JAMES PRESS. Los Angeles.1994.
7. "Machine-learning algorithms require large amounts of data." - Under the heading 'Risks and copyright' in the content named 'Ethics' from the article titled 'Artificial Intelligence', Wikipedia.
8. "The foundation of AI is human insights that may be determined in such a manner that machines can easily realize the jobs, from the most simple to the most complicated." – 'AI vs Human Intelligence: Key Insights and Comparisons!' by Simplilearn, Last updated on June 4, 2024. From 'Simplilearn – Online Certification Training Course Provider'.
9. "Returning to the original question about artificial intelligence and thinking, I think we can solidly conclude that these systems don't do thinking at all." – 'Can Artificial Intelligence "Think"?' by Daniel Shapiro, Oct 23, 2019, Forbes.

# On Man, Machine & Mentorship: Pedagogical Perspectives in 2024



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Did you know you can enrol for a 'Beginner's Course' on 'How to use ChatGPT'?

There's also a WikiHow page on 'How not to get caught using ChatGPT'.

And worry not, there's a step-by-step tutorial on 'What to do if you're falsely accused of using ChatGPT'.

Just realised that I've mentioned ChatGPT four times in my opening lines alone and I do hope this does not make me that terrible person who uses ChatGPT (yikes, five times now!) to write his essays. Meanwhile, could they not have thought of a less clunky name than Generative Pre-trained Transformer?

Anyway - Let me begin by taking you back in time to a hand-written note by my grandfather, lying somewhere in the attic (as in the note, not my grandfather), dated in the 1930s. The cursive writing in ink is quite calligraphic. Not a single word has been scratched out. No error in spelling or grammar. It is a formal letter to his employer but it can qualify as poetry in prose. Viewed from a distance, it looks like a solid block of exquisite filigree in peacock blue.

Cut to - I wrote the above paragraph going back and forth between the words and phrases, rearranging entire sentences till they read right. In all probability, I will come back and change a few things around. Or I may just delete it all and write something else entirely. All thanks to 'Pages' on my iMac - or 'Pagemaker 5' back in the 90's, on which I learnt to type.

So you see, I need to possess neither the attention span, nor the clarity of thought, nor command over the language like my previous generations did.

Do I have it easier than my previous generations?

Yes. Yes. And yes.



## ■ WELCOME TO AI

They say it's not yet the age of AI, given that we're only beginning to grapple with its scope and implications. They also say that it has been the age of AI since a few decades now, except that we just started calling it AI.

I'd say that AI is our latest distraction. I mean to use the word distraction in the way Woody Allen uses it. Or J Krishnamurti would.

There was a time not so long ago when it was exciting to say that we have information at the click of a button. Today, it can be described as death by information - it's being force-fed to you whether or not you choose to click that button. The baby needs to be fed - never mind if it hasn't been burped from the previous meal.

Intelligence is thus proving to be a measure of how much one has managed not to know.

But wait - Stop Press! At the time of writing this, a billion-dollar corporation based in India has paid tribute to a "Sitar Maestro & Bharat Ratna Awardee" with a picture of someone else with a vague resemblance - and he's holding a Guitar!

It's likely that they decided to generate an AI image of his... but alas, their inputs weren't techie enough. Remember how we took our time to figure out the right keywords for better search results on Google? But still, a Guitar for a Sitar? And for someone who's a national treasure and global icon?

Worth pondering over how and why such blunders happen when information is so easily accessible. Part of the the problem is what is called 'The Google Effect'. And if you're about to google that - what a delicious irony!

Meanwhile, news from the other side of the world -

Back in the 70's, Pink Floyd gained a

reputation for 'doing simple things in the most complicated way possible' (*Inside Out*, *Nick Mason*). For one of their songs, they felt it necessary to record a single line of spoken text at double-speed using a falsetto - only to be replayed at slow tempo. Or when for one of their album covers, they found it quite reasonable to float a giant inflatable pig in the skies - which of course, freed itself creating panic among pilots - when simply an hour at the design studio would have got the job done.

Cut to this year - about half a century later - the Floyd announced results of an animation contest celebrating 50 years of *The Dark Side of the Moon*. One of the winning entries was AI-generated. The decision left fans aghast and understandably invited heavy trolling. For one, it wasn't fair that natural intelligence was being pitted against artificial. Two - the winning entry was mediocre at best. Nascent AI meets nascent human, you know.

It's easy to predict that a similar contest in the future - even just a couple of years down the line - will likely attract only AI-generated entries. (Already, there's news of a photographer being disqualified from an image competition because he won with a real photo.)

And then I guess we'll have to wait a few more years till humans learn to integrate AI effectively so that it involves some inherent merit beyond keying in a few commands. (And the Grammy for the Best Debut AI Prompt goes to...)

Then a few years later, the lines will be blurred.

Deja vu, ain't it?

We made plastic flowers look so real that now the real flowers need to look plastic.

So what are we really bracing for, when we

stare at the potential of AI? We are bracing for the vast potential of human inventiveness of another kind. Eg. Who knew that the advent of auto-tune technology would unleash upon us that horror of horrors - the Bhojpuri mix?

### **Hey teacher, leave them kids alone!**

*I saw a 'news item' the other day featuring two women - a Principal & a Teacher, engaged in a rowdy physical fight on campus. Complete with name-calling, hair-pulling, shirt-tearing and bloody-bruising. The given reason for the fight was that the teacher reported late.*

*First, I quickly made a mental note to be more careful about being punctual. Next, I imagined these two women on a less eventful day - going about their business of educating the school kids about empathy, good conduct, non-violence and all those wonderful virtues we are taught in school.*

## ■ CLASSROOM TEACHING: THIS TIME, IT'S PERSONAL

*"Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught."* - Oscar Wilde

I have often wondered if I'm entering a classroom of 30 students or if I'm attempting to enter 30 classrooms all at once.

I find it counter-intuitive (or just plain wrong) to suppose that anybody could jot down a set of fool-proof instructions on how to teach. Certainly not for the benefit of every bozo capable of navigating his way to the "How To" section of an airport bookstore, to borrow from Mr. Neil French.

*Constructivism* is the understanding of a mode of learning rather than a manual for teaching. Learning is a personal process. The basic assumptions and principles of the Constructivist view of learning can be summarised as follows:

- Learning is an active process
- Learning is an adaptive activity
- Learning is situated in the context in which

it occurs

- Knowledge is not innate, passively absorbed, or invented but constructed by the learner
- All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic
- All knowledge is socially constructed
- Learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world
- Experience and prior understanding play a role in learning
- Social interaction plays a role in learning

Effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve. (Boethel and Dimock 2000; Fox 2001)

It is important to understand that learning (sense-making, meaning making) is an act of the individual. It is something that people do, not something that can be done to them. Teachers cannot 'make' students learn. What teachers can do is to develop situations and environments in which students are able to engage with ideas and materials in ways that enable them to make their own meaning of the experience - construct their own understanding of the experience. This is known

as a constructivist vision of learning and teaching. (Fosnot, 2005)

### **Veneration Gap**

*It was the 9th of March, Ustad Zakir Hussain's birthday - and I walked into my rhythm class, all eager and excited for an hour or so of exquisite music listening ignited by a trivia question -*

*"Today is the birthday of an absolutely legendary artist. Guess who!!"*

*No response.*

*Awkward silence.*

*Then a student raised his hand, somewhat tentatively.*

*I was hopeful.*

*"Sir, is it Janhvi Kapoor?"*

*PS: This was a serious blow not only to my intended segue into Tabla wizardry but also to my firm belief in Linda Goodman.*

*PPS: I later found out to some relief that the dates are close, but not the same. Yay!*

Constructivism as a formalised theory in education is a fairly recent phenomenon dating back to Jean Piaget. But let's look at a tradition we've had at home - our time-honoured tradition of *Guru Shishya Parampara*. Isn't it significant that the name itself includes both the giver and the receiver of knowledge?

In the realm of Indian Classical music, this tradition lays great emphasis on how learning

begins. There are well-known accounts of the patience and aptitude of potential disciples in music being put to the ultimate test for many months and even years. It would be the *Guru* who decided when the time was right and what the pace of learning should be.

Over the decades of arduous training, there is a phase when the *Shishya* has no business questioning anything. But there also comes a phase when questioning is encouraged - the *Guru* is eager to engage with his *Shishya* in conversation. The approach is all-encompassing and not limited to merely the learning of technique or skillsets. Eventually, the *Shishya's* world-view itself gets transformed and enriched thanks to the *sanskar* he has received from his *Guru*.

However, the *Shishya* still needs to find his own path, carve his own niche. *Shishyas* who became carbon copies of their *Gurus* have eventually found rejection. A truly great *Guru* is one who catalyses the process of his *Shishya* finding his own voice.

While it is obvious that the above is impossible to emulate in modern classroom conditions - the key takeaway is that back then, the approach to teaching was personalised and holistic. Precisely where 21st century education models are evidently headed.

The key then, would be to strike a balance between teacher-led and student-led approaches with the aim of helping students construct their unique understanding of the subject and build their own unique personalities.

How does one achieve personalisation in a classroom setting? I find that within the first few sessions, every batch settles down to its own dynamic - with a handful students eager to lead on the engagement and participation front. The task for me then is to build up from there and include more and more students in the ongoing dialogue, as it were. This exchange

reveals the subtle differences in points of view of individuals and helps students reflect upon their biases and question any of their foregone conclusions. A reality check of sorts.

After all, an unmissable step towards learning is unlearning.

### ■ SWITCHING OFF THE CONDITIONING

I was playing a few old Hindi film songs by a particular composer - and as I usually do - pointing out to certain idiosyncrasies of style, but not revealing the name of the composer just yet. A student made a giant leap of a connection and related it to the melodic movement of a song he had heard in one of my previous sessions - and yes, it turned out to be by the same composer.

Now here's the remarkable thing - the lone student who made the melodic connection is of European descent. With unarguably, the least exposure to Hindi film music. Incidentally, no other student (all Indians) could make the connection even after I played the track for the second time.

Being least exposed to this genre of music meant that this student's mind was a cleaner slate - with which he could decipher patterns and congruencies. He had the advantage of being the least conditioned.

The intent here is not to jump to conclusions based on a solitary event - in fact, there have been quite a few and I find it rewarding to connect the dots.

For instance -  
A segment from a classic rock track was perceived as an intro to an old Hindi song by students because I deliberately played it out of context. Or when the melody of a song led an entire class to believe that the lyrics were in Sanskrit when they were actually in Italian!

We've all seen how our brains compensate for gaps in information. Like the fact that you can read this without much trouble - a case of our brains putting together the whole even if the

parts don't make sense on their own.

(Typing the above sentence was an achievement though, because we've made machines that compensate for our errors.)

#### On Words like Pedagogy

A word that could well serve to qualify the scientific study of children's behaviour when suffering from a mild foot infection, Pedagogy must surely rank among those particularly unappealing words in the English language.

Right up there - rather down there - with Podiatrist-certified soles, a medical-ish term intended to assure you of the ultimate comfort while also justifying the astronomical price of shoes. Except - my primal instinct on encountering words like Podiatry is to keep my old shoes on and walk away as quickly as possible.

Dialling up the unsavoury by a few notches is the verb Fard - which apparently means to use cosmetics on your face. (I want to know who is in charge of word approvals.)

Meanwhile, top honours must go to Pulchritude - which ironically, and most unfortunately, means beautiful. I have my doubts if absolutely anyone - even in these wonderful times of blurring gender identity - would consider it flattering to be classified as pulchritudinous.

## ■ BEWARE THE INTELLIGENT IDIOT!

*"I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so that I can do art and writing, not for AI to do my art and writing so that I can do my laundry and dishes."* A recent quote by author/gamer, Joanna Maciejewska.

Yes, all of humanity is being encouraged to 'follow their passion' or 'be creative / artistic'... which is perceived as 'more easily achievable' with the crutch of AI. Am reminded of that most beautiful passage on Excellence by Mr John Gardner - *"The society that scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water."*

With YouTube having cemented its stature as the most popular Guru for guidance on every conceivable subject and with AI poised to take over creative duties and deliver results 'with less effort' - thus unbridling tidal waves of mediocrity - the challenge for the younger generation lies not so much in embracing ever-emerging technology - which is non-negotiable - but in avoiding the template and resisting the cliché.

Look at popular music today - 'Originals' are being churned out by the thousands on a daily basis. The vast majority of them sound like

they fell off the assembly line in a song factory. That cracker of a quote by Mr Wilde comes to mind - *"Your manuscript is both good and original. But the part that is good is not original, and the part that is original is not good."*

Or in the words of Robert Frost, *"The best things and best people rise out of their separateness; I'm against a homogenised society because I want the cream to rise."*

As the lines blur forever more between man and machine, there seems to be only one thing left for us to do - be more human.

Here's a thought - I asked ChatGPT why she thinks she's different from a human. (Yeah, it's a she. Why not? With the kind of fights humans are having with each other over pronouns, don't we have bigger issues at hand?) Anyway - she said "I do not have personal experiences or independent thoughts. All I do is combine existing ideas based on the training I have received."

I ask you, fellow human - isn't that a lot like you and me?

## ■ EPILOGUE

The need today for all of us - teacher or student - is to be shaken out of our security blanket of answers so that we can ask the right questions.

Perhaps the ultimate and most ancient constructivist conversation ever - happened on the scene of a battlefield thousands of years ago. You know the story. There's this great warrior prince about to embark on a war

upon his own clan - and his moral dilemma crushes him into inaction. How can he kill his own family members? What exactly is he setting out to achieve? What will the consequences of his actions be? How can he live with his internal conflict? Thus overwhelmed with questions upon questions, he enters into a long and profound dialogue with his charioteer.

Now one could argue that this conversation could have happened earlier - and far more conveniently - over breakfast that morning. Or maybe over the previous weekend. It didn't need to happen bang in the middle of a battlefield - with entire armies waiting anxiously to begin something rather unpleasant. Imagine the whole lot of them having to wait for their near-certain death just because one person was having a moment of introspection. 700 Verses across 18 Chapters worth of introspection!

Actually, no.

It was the only time this exchange could have happened. It was the only time this lesson could have been delivered. Because it was the only time the lesson would have been received. The stage was set. It was the moment of truth. The answers appeared only when and - only to whom - the questions appeared.

This is not to imply that one must play God in the classroom. But yes, the class does need a jolly good charioteer.

**- Shankar Lakshmanan**

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# Fostering Mixed Media Innovation in Animation: Insights from a 48-Hour Hackathon



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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of a 48-hour Animation Hackathon on the conceptualization and utilization of mixed media techniques among animation and game design students at Whistling Woods International. By analyzing participant outputs, survey responses, and aesthetic evaluations, the research investigates how short, intensive competition formats can foster mixed-media animation practices. The hackathon format provided a platform for students to experiment with various media, demonstrating the feasibility of such events in promoting creative and interdisciplinary approaches in animation education. The study highlights the potential of hackathons to serve as a catalyst for the adoption and development of mixed media techniques among animation students. This study highlights the feasibility of using hackathons as a platform for creative innovation and interdisciplinary learning in animation education, emphasizing the value of mixed media in enhancing both the production

process and the final visual output.

**Keywords:** *Mixed Media Animation, Animation Hackathon, Animation Competitions, Animation Skill Set, Animation Short Films*



## INTRODUCTION

Animation as an art form has evolved significantly over the years, transcending traditional boundaries and embracing diverse mediums to convey narratives and evoke emotions. One notable aspect of this evolution is the integration of mixed media, wherein various techniques and materials are combined to create visually compelling and innovative animations. This approach not only expands the creative possibilities for animators but also enriches the viewing experience for audiences.

In her paper, 'Experimental Animation, Hybridisation and New Media' (Stewart, 2021), Michelle Stewart draws a distinction between orthodox animation and experimental animation and speaks about the interdisciplinary potential of experimental animation based on its innate mixed media approach. While experimental animation is associated with non-linear, non-objective abstract animated film, the discipline of mixed media is equally suited for commercial animated films and motion graphics videos as well.

The Indian animation industry has demonstrated remarkable prowess in creating mixed-media productions that weave together diverse cultural elements and artistic mediums. Works such as Nina Sabnani's animated short films exemplify this approach,

where cultural representation is imbued through a fusion of traditional techniques and digital animation. For instance, 'Tanko Bole Che' intricately combines the traditional weaving of Kutch with digital cutout animation, while 'Hum Chitra Banate Hai' integrates paintings by the Bhil community with digital animation, enriching the storytelling with cultural authenticity and visual depth.

In addition to individual artists, modern animation studios in India have also been at the forefront of exploring mixed media within an interdisciplinary context. Post Office Studios, for instance, showcases a remarkable blend of mediums in their promotional video for Hyderabad Design Week. This captivating piece seamlessly integrates 2D animation, 3D animation, stop motion, motion graphics, and live-action footage, demonstrating a dynamic art direction that bridges multiple media styles cohesively. Similarly, Ekabhuya Studios' timeless creation, 'The Warli Revolt', harnesses the power of mixed media to deliver an intense narrative experience. Drawing inspiration from Warli art, the video immerses viewers in a visually compelling world characterized by Warli characters and stylizations. The narrative is further intensified by the infusion of Marathi rap, adding layers of cultural significance and contemporary relevance to the storytelling.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research paper aims to investigate the following three problem statements -

1. To explore whether a short, intensive animation filmmaking competition format can effectively facilitate the conceptualization and utilization of mixed media techniques among animation students.
2. To assess whether students engaging in
3. mixed media projects comprehend the utility and advantages of the mediums they employ.
3. To examine whether competition formats, such as short, intensive animation filmmaking competitions, can serve as a catalyst for further exploration of mixed media techniques among animation students.



## ■ PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study takes into consideration two distinct aspects: mixed media animation and a short, intensive competition format, and examines how the latter can propagate the former.

Encouraging the practice of using mixed media among students is essential, but it should be done in a manner that fosters self-aware acceptance rather than feeling forced or pressured. Therefore, this study aims to explore methods that stimulate a self-aware acceptance of mixed media animation among students, focusing on one such activity: the short, intensive competition format.

The primary objective of this study is to analyse the effectiveness of the short, intensive competition format in fostering mixed-media animation among students. As

highlighted in Briscoe and Mulligan's study, "Digital Innovation: The Hackathon Phenomenon" (Briscoe, G., & Mulligan, C.), 86% of participants identified learning as the primary reason for their participation, underscoring the effectiveness of Hackathons in facilitating the acquisition of new concepts by students.

By examining the outcomes of the competition, including student projects, feedback, and reflections, the research seeks to evaluate the extent to which the competition format encourages students to embrace mixed media techniques in animation production. Through this analysis, the study aims to contribute insights into pedagogical strategies for promoting mixed media animation education and cultivating a creative mindset among animation students.

## ■ SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

In the field of animation education, one of the larger problems is the uni-dimensional view that students have about the animation medium and to open their minds to the possibility of harnessing the advantages of these mediums and to cultivate the artistic prowess to understand how to mix these mediums effectively and aesthetically. It is a well-known idea among animation professionals that every medium of animation exhibits its own visual language and the

attempt is always to compliment the narrative. The use of mix-media, however, is a more problem-solving, production efficient approach that can also have further contextual implications on animation video, depending on the subject matter. And it requires a significant amount of creative quotient to execute it well, and it is a need of the hour to introduce students to the significance and implications of using mixed media.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The study covered in this paper is based on the case study of a 48-hour Animation Hackathon competition held at the Whistling Woods International campus. The participants were students from the Animation and Game

Design Department, spanning across the first, second, and third years and across the average age group of 17 to 21. As part of this competition, participants were expected to create groups of three. There were no stipulations on how the grouping should be done, allowing for organic team formation and

collaboration.

The objective of this challenge was for the teams to create an animation film with a minimum duration of one minute. All mediums of animation were open to the participants, encouraging them to experiment with various techniques and styles. The students were expected to follow a theme provided by faculty members at the first minute of the 48-hour challenge. This ensured that students did not come prepared with specific concepts, compelling them to ideate and execute their projects within the given timeframe.

Choosing an appropriate theme was crucial for the success of this challenge. The theme needed to strike a balance between specificity and flexibility: a theme that was too specific could limit experimentation and result in homogenous outputs, whereas a theme that was too broad might lead participants to lose focus on the core objective. After careful consideration, the theme decided upon was 'The Flying Book'. This theme offered ample room for creative interpretation and experimentation while maintaining a cohesive central idea that all teams could explore from different angles.

After registrations, 60 participants enrolled for the competition, divided across 20 teams. Participants spent the 48 hours of the competition on the college premises, using college resources and their personal laptops. By the end of the 48 hours, students submitted their final films via a provided drive link. These films, along with the experiences of the participants, form the data source for the qualitative analysis conducted in this study.

### DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY

The films collected during the 48-hour Animation Hackathon, along with the learning outcomes of the participants, formed the core data for analysis. The analysis process was divided into several key steps to ensure a thorough evaluation of the competition's

impact on fostering mixed-media animation. These steps are outlined below:

**1. Segregating Completed Films:** The initial step involved segregating the films based on their completion status. The first task was to separate the incomplete films, which were automatically forfeited, from the completed ones. This segregation allowed for a focused analysis of the films that met the competition's requirements and provided a basis for evaluating the successful projects.

**2. Identifying the Mixed-Media Films:** The next step was to categorize the completed films into single-media and mixed-media films. Mixed-media films were those that integrated two or more different animation techniques or styles. This classification was crucial for understanding the extent to which students embraced the use of mixed media in their projects. By identifying the mixed-media films, the study could assess the proportion of participants who ventured into this creative territory compared to those who opted for single-media approaches.

**3. Analyzing the Aesthetic Properties of the Mixed-Media Films:** Evaluating the aesthetic value of a film is generally considered a highly subjective process. To analyze the aesthetic value of the mixed-media films from a more objective point of view, this study utilizes the findings of Tarvainen, Westman, and Oittinen's "The Way Films Feel: Features and Mood in Film" (Tarvainen et al, 2015). Their research associates mood and aesthetics based on two factors: low-level aesthetic features and high-level aesthetic features. Since their study indicates that the ratings of low-level aesthetic features are more consistent than those of high-level features, this paper employs the low-level aesthetic features to break down the aesthetic properties of the mixed-media films.

The low-level aesthetic features utilized in this analysis are as follows:

**VISUAL:**

- **Brightness and Darkness:** Assessing the correlation between bright and dark elements within the films to determine how these contrasts affect the visual appeal and mood.
- **Colourful and Colourless:** Evaluating the use of color versus monochrome elements to understand their impact on the overall aesthetic experience.

**AUDITORY:**

- **Loud and Quiet:** Analyzing the balance between loud and quiet sounds, including sound effects and ambient noise, to see how they contribute to the film's mood and immersion.
- **Dialogue and Music:** Examining the interplay between dialogue and music, and how this balance influences the narrative and emotional tone of the films.

**TEMPORAL:**

- **Fast and Slow:** Investigating the pacing of the films, including the speed of action and scene transitions, to understand their effect on the audience's engagement and perception of the narrative.
- **Smooth and Rhythmic:** Assessing the flow of the films, focusing on the smoothness of transitions and the rhythmic patterns created by editing and animation techniques.

By utilizing these low-level aesthetic features, the study aims to provide a more objective analysis of the mixed-media films, focusing on how these fundamental elements contribute to the overall aesthetic value and effectiveness of the projects.

**4. Interviews and Surveys with Participants**

**Engaged in Mixed Media:** To gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and motivations, interviews and surveys were

conducted with those who created mixed-media films. The objectives of these interactions were:

- **Understanding Thought Processes:** Exploring the participants' rationale for choosing mixed media, including their creative inspirations and the decision-making process behind their medium choices.
- **Impact of Competition Format:** Assessing whether the 48-hour competition format influenced their decision to use mixed media. This included understanding if the time constraints and collaborative environment encouraged or necessitated the use of mixed media.
- **Future Intentions:** Gauging the participants' likelihood of experimenting with mixed-media animation in future projects. This involved discussing their experiences during the hackathon and whether it sparked a sustained interest in mixed media.

By following this structured data analysis strategy, the study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of how the short, intensive competition format can influence students' engagement with mixed media.

## FINDINGS

### OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANT OUTPUTS

Out of the 20 teams that registered for the 48-hour Animation Hackathon, 15 teams successfully completed their films, resulting in a completion rate of 75%. The remaining 5 teams were unable to finish their projects within the given timeframe, and their films were automatically forfeited.

### IDENTIFICATION OF MIXED-MEDIA FILMS

Among the 15 completed films, 6 were identified as mixed-media projects, while the remaining 9 utilised a single animation medium. This indicates a notable engagement with mixed-media techniques, with 40% of the completed projects incorporating multiple animation styles. Participants employed various combinations of 2D animation, 3D animation, pixelation, live-action imagery, and motion graphics.

### ANALYSIS OF THE AESTHETICS

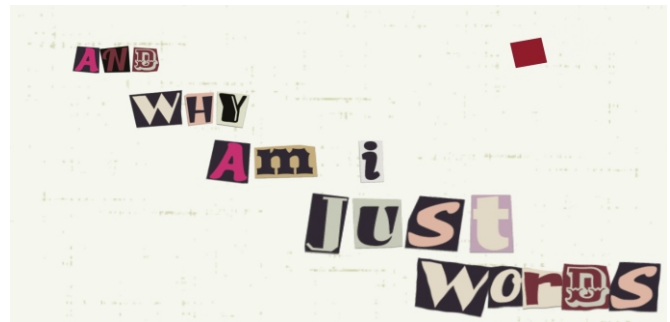
Using the low-level aesthetic features as outlined in Tarvainen, Westman, and Oittinen's "The Way Films Feel: Features and Mood in Film" (Tarvainen et al, 2015), each of the six mixed-media films was evaluated based on binary options. These options included visual (brightness and colorfulness), auditory (volume and type of sound), and temporal (speed and rhythm). The following are the names of the films and their corresponding markers:

#### Books of War



- **Visual:** Bright, Colourful
- **Auditory:** Quiet, Music
- **Temporal:** Slow, Smooth

#### What is the Secret of Life



- **Visual:** Bright, Colourful
- **Auditory:** Quiet, Dialogue
- **Temporal:** Slow, Smooth

#### The Book of Yokai



- **Visual:** Dark, Colourful
- **Auditory:** Quiet, Dialogue
- **Temporal:** Slow, Smooth

#### The Flying Book Story of Alfred Winter





- **Visual:** Dark, Colourless
- **Auditory:** Loud, Dialogue
- **Temporal:** Fast, Smooth

## The Flying Book



- **Visual:** Bright, Colourful
- **Auditory:** Quiet, Music
- **Temporal:** Slow, Smooth

## The Book of God



- **Visual:** Dark, Colourless
- **Auditory:** Loud, Music
- **Temporal:** Fast, Rhythmic

## SURVEY RESULTS

### SECTION 1 - PROJECT CONCEPTUALIZATION

The first section of the survey focused on project conceptualization and the choice of mediums used by the teams. The findings were as follows:

#### Out of the 6 mixed-media teams:

- 1 team used 4 different mediums.
- 4 teams used 3 different mediums.

From this analysis, we can infer several patterns and insights regarding the aesthetic choices made by the participants:

**1. Visual Features:** The majority of films (4 out of 6) leaned towards bright and colourful visuals. However, two films utilized dark and colourless visuals.

**2. Auditory Features:** Most films (4 out of 6) incorporated quiet auditory features, with a balanced split between music and dialogue. The remaining two films used loud auditory features.

**3. Temporal Features:** The temporal analysis showed a tendency towards slow and smooth pacing (4 out of 6). The two films with fast pacing also showed a variance in rhythmic pattern, one being smooth and the other rhythmic.

By applying these low-level aesthetic features, we gain a clearer understanding of how the students employed mixed media to create varied and distinct visual, auditory, and temporal experiences in their films.

- 1 team used 2 different mediums.

Additionally, insights from the 18 participants who worked on mixed-media projects revealed:

- **72.2%** agreed that choosing mixed media was aimed at saving production time
- **94.4%** agreed that choosing mixed media

was aimed at enhancing the visuals of the film

In the comments, participants frequently mentioned that their choice of mixed media was influenced by the skill set of each individual member of the group and the flexibility provided by the theme, which allowed for a creative use of mixed media.

### SECTION 2 - COMPETITION FORMAT

The second section examined participants' experiences with the competition format and its influence on their use of mixed media:

- **55.6%** of the participants were trying mixed media for the first time because of this competition
  - **50%** of the participants believed that the short, intensive format of the competition compelled them to think in terms of mixed media
  - **72.2%** of the participants stated they would choose mixed media even if the competition timeline were reduced from 48 hours to 24 hours
- **16.7%** said they are very likely
  - **38.9%** said they are likely
  - **38.9%** were neutral
  - **5.6%** said they are not likely
- When asked about their willingness to recommend the use of mixed media to other artists:
- **38.9%** said they are very likely
  - **44.4%** said they are likely
  - **16.7%** were neutral

### SECTION 3 - FUTURE INTENTIONS

The final section of the survey explored participants' future intentions regarding mixed-media projects:

- When asked about their willingness to engage in more mixed-media projects in the future:
  - **27.8%** said they are very likely
  - **61.1%** said they are likely
  - **11.1%** were neutral
- When asked about their willingness to experiment with mediums apart from those already used:

## DISCUSSION

The participation of 40% of the teams in producing mixed-media films is a notable achievement for the 48-hour Animation Hackathon. This engagement is particularly encouraging given that 55.6% of these participants were experimenting with mixed media for the first time. This suggests that the competition format was effective in motivating students to step out of their comfort zones and explore new creative techniques.

The aesthetic breakdown of the films revealed some interesting trends and potential areas for improvement. A majority of the participants favored saturated and flamboyant visuals. While this approach can be visually appealing, it may have inadvertently hindered the overall visual quality and coherence of the films. The preference for bright, colorful imagery suggests a desire to create vibrant and engaging visuals, but it also highlights a potential over-reliance on vivid aesthetics at the expense of more nuanced visual storytelling.

Similarly, the choice of quiet auditory features by most teams indicates a strategic decision to lower production responsibilities. By minimizing the complexity of their soundscapes, participants likely aimed to streamline their production processes within the tight 48-hour timeframe.

One of the most intriguing findings from the aesthetic analysis is the predominance of smooth, single-paced narratives among the mixed-media films. Five out of the six teams opted for smooth temporal features, avoiding rhythmic pacing. This uniformity in pacing suggests a challenge in integrating more dynamic and varied temporal rhythms within the constraints of the competition. The reliance on smooth pacing could be attributed to the time limitations and the participants' familiarity with creating straightforward, linear

narratives.

The survey results are largely positive regarding the participants' mixed-media response to the competition format. A striking feature is that students view mixed media not only as a time-saving approach but also as a method to enhance the visual appeal of their films. The competition's ability to encourage first-time exploration of mixed media is a significant educational benefit. It demonstrates that short, intensive competitions can effectively serve as introductory platforms for students to experiment with and adopt new animation techniques. The fact that participants would choose mixed media even if the competition time were shortened signifies their belief in mixed media as a viable and effective animation style. The constant mention of team composition and the core skill set of team members highlights the significance of having diverse skills and interests within a team. All six teams that produced mixed-media films had participants with varied skill sets rather than uni-dimensional abilities. This diversity in skills contributed heavily to the successful creation of mixed-media projects, as it allowed teams to leverage individual strengths and explore different animation techniques more effectively. The positive correlation between diverse team skills and the production of mixed-media films suggests that interdisciplinary collaboration is a key factor in fostering creativity and innovation in animation.

While participants have given a positive response towards engaging in future mixed-media projects and recommending mixed media to peers, a notable percentage of participants remain neutral or negative about experimenting with mediums beyond those they used for the Hackathon. This indicates that while mixed media is a welcome idea, many artists might be reluctant to stretch their horizons and experiment with unfamiliar

mediums. This suggests the need for more focused efforts in encouraging students to explore a wider range of media and techniques. Continuous exposure, structured guidance, and confidence-building measures could help students become more comfortable with and proficient in using diverse animation mediums.

For future Hackathon instances, several strategies could be implemented to increase engagement with mixed media. Regular screenings of films that demonstrate the liberating capacities of mixed media,

workshops on creating various still image and moving image concepts based on mixed media, and faculty interventions during the Hackathon could encourage a larger group of students to opt for mixed media. These initiatives could help students recognize the potential of mixed media, both for their in-house projects and for future installments of the Hackathon. By showcasing the versatility and creative possibilities of mixed media, these activities can inspire more students to explore and experiment with different animation techniques.

## CONCLUSION

The 48-hour Animation Hackathon at Whistling Woods International provided valuable insights into the potential of short, intensive competition formats to foster the conceptualization and utilization of mixed media techniques among animation students. Through the analysis of participant outputs, survey responses, and aesthetic evaluations, several key conclusions were drawn.

Firstly, the competition effectively facilitated the engagement with mixed media techniques. A notable 40% of the teams produced mixed-media films, with a significant portion of participants trying mixed media for the first time. This indicates that the competition format can indeed introduce and encourage students to explore mixed media, demonstrating its feasibility as a teaching tool.

Secondly, the survey results suggest that students engaging in mixed media projects largely comprehend the utility and advantages of the mediums they employ. The majority of participants recognized mixed media as a time-saving approach and a method to enhance the visual appeal of their films. This understanding reflects a growing appreciation for the versatility and creative potential of mixed media techniques.

Lastly, the findings suggest that short, intensive animation filmmaking competitions can serve as a catalyst for further exploration of mixed media techniques among animation students. The willingness of participants to engage in future mixed-media projects and recommend mixed media to peers indicates a positive reception and a potential shift towards broader adoption of these techniques. However, the hesitation to experiment with new mediums highlights the need for ongoing support and encouragement.

Overall, the hackathon format proved to be an effective means of promoting mixed media animation, with promising implications for future educational practices. By addressing the identified areas for improvement, such as providing targeted training and iterative feedback, future competitions can further enhance the creative and educational outcomes for animation student



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# The Impact Of Academic - Industry Affiliations on Film School Pedagogy



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*There was a noticeable gap between the technical training imparted by film schools and what the industry expected when hiring film school editing graduates. The aim of this paper is to research methods to narrow down this gap, so that the skillset delivered to a student in a film institute would better match the expectations by a post-production company hiring an assistant editor or an editor. Another concern was to make the student learning experience as intuitive as possible and enable the student to quickly adapt to a rapidly changing industry once he joins the workforce. The search led Whistling Woods International Limited to collaborate with Avid Technology and tap into their vast experience in the post-production editing domain, and then transfer this technology learning into their syllabus.*

Since its inception in 2006, Whistling Woods International Limited <sup>(1)</sup> has been actively involved with industry leading Technology Partners <sup>(2)</sup>. Considering the extremely technical aspect of film making, it has been essential for Whistling Woods International Limited to collaborate with technology companies while imparting training on company specific hardware and software

solutions. During the previous decades, these companies have shaped much of the film making processes used in the industry, and constant improvements are being added to their program packages annually.

This paper attempts to study the significance of the partnership with Avid Technology <sup>(3)</sup> within the sphere of post-production training in the Editing Department of Whistling Woods International Limited. Whistling Woods International Limited (WWIL) employs Avid Media Composer extensively in its editing laboratories for the film making program. The method to be used to gauge the training's functionality was to survey the response of recent batches of students who have completed this Avid training in the last two years.

Avid Technology is a pioneering video content creation company and Avid Media Composer <sup>(4)</sup> is Avid's industry standard Emmy winning editing software <sup>(5)</sup> used in filmmaking. Avid Technology has had a long-standing association with media schools worldwide, spanning three decades. Avid Learning <sup>(6)</sup> was established to meet the growing need for Avid to associate with film schools internationally.

With Avid being the preferred solution in most film schools, Avid Technology has created the Avid Learning Partner Program <sup>(7)</sup> especially for film and media schools. This course has been created in keeping with the growing demand by the industry for trained Avid Editors and assistant editors.

The educational affiliation between Whistling Woods International Limited and Avid Technology has been actively focusing on this requirement since 2014. Whistling Woods International Limited is an active Avid Learning Partner, <sup>(8)</sup> having incorporated this Avid designed curriculum into its editing syllabus for a decade now.

Avid Education prepares a comprehensive courseware for its Learning Partners consisting of an Avid Learning Series courseware book, accompanied with appropriate exercise footage. The exercises consist of a dialogue scene, an action sequence, and a narrative sequence using music soundtracks. This courseware is updated at regular intervals by Avid Education to reflect the progression of Avid Media Composer releases. New books and exercises are then made available to all Avid Learning Partners. The Avid Media Composer Fundamentals MC 101 and MC 110 are the two supplied courseware books. MC 101 consists of 12 structured instructor lessons with accompanying self-paced student exercises, while MC 110 has 15 lessons and exercises. The training content and exercises are exclusively designed by Avid Education itself.

The Avid courseware book is designed to familiarize students with the procedures and practices that will assist them to successfully complete a Media Composer project. The key processes covered are namely, correctly starting a project, Inputting the media into project, Organizing the media into Bins and Folders, Building the Sequence, Trimming the Sequence, Adding Titles and finally Exports. The lessons focus progressively on each step

of the editing process, namely Transcoding of media, Syncing of sound files, Building a Sequence and then Exporting. Post project Media Management and archiving is also addressed. MC 101 commences with the application basics such as creating a project correctly, bin management and other core concepts such as Media classification and Organization, Use of Timecode, Titling, etc.

Editorial workflows are covered in detail next, namely Syncing, Timeline operations, adding audio and music tracks and trimming a sequence. The essential tools of Media Composer are taught in detail such as the Audio Tool, the Audio Mixer, Transcode and the Consolidate Tool. MC 110 the continuing companion course, further intensifies the skills taught in MC 101 and then moves into the more advanced levels of operations such as Visual Effects, Chroma Keying, Speed Effects and Motion Tracking.

Best Practices are stressed throughout, namely Media Management, Consolidation and Troubleshooting Offline Media which will enable the student to conduct a project confidently from start to finish and deliver the final product in a timely manner.

This raises the question of how effectively the training can be deployed to enhance the student's learning experience. The program starts at the beginning of the semester, extending over 5 weeks. Each lesson consists of an hour-long instructor-led demonstration. The lesson objectives from the book are clearly delineated at the start of the class. Immediately after the demonstration, the student completes an hour-long instructor aided practical that reinforces the procedures taught earlier during the demonstration. Before the next lesson commences, a review of the previous day's lesson objectives is done to ascertain the student's understanding and retention of the previous lesson's concepts.

Once the Avid MC 101 course is completed, the student is assessed on his submission of

the two Avid supplied exercises. Finally, a written examination is then conducted to test the student's knowledge and retention of the syllabus covered in the Avid MC 101 course. The Avid MC 110 course is then conducted during the next semester of the specialization course.

The instructors at WWIL have undergone an Avid Learning Instructor course and have been

certified by Avid. Avid Instructor Guides and additional instructional aids are made available to instructors on a regular basis by Avid Education. Technically, the current version of Avid Media Composer is used for instruction and student practice.

### ■ SURVEY METHOD

The survey <sup>(9)</sup> was conducted to gauge the effect of the Avid Training Course on the students' learning. The method used to gather data to ascertain the performance of the program was an (anonymous) online survey sent to students via Microsoft forms. <sup>(10)</sup>

Both batches had completed the Avid Media Composer training over a period of two semesters and in addition had finished standard editing classroom practicals and two coordinated student projects.

The two batches of Editing specialization students who had completed the Avid training

over the last two years, namely the 2021-2024 batches, were included in this survey. Out of the two batches involved in the poll, a total of 75% responded and participated in the poll. It has been observed that the student's implementation of the concepts learnt during the training into their practical exercises and actual projects takes a considerable period. Thus, it is of prime importance to consider this factor when measuring course performance. Keeping this in mind, the immediate batch of students who had recently undergone the training in the first half of 2024, were excluded from the review.

### ■ SURVEY RESULTS

83% of the surveyed participants felt the Avid supplied courseware books were adequate for the training program. 83% felt that the Avid supplied exercises were suitable for learning the basic operations of the Avid application.

100% felt that the training equipped them to handle the Mise-en-Scene Workshop, Night Shoot and Location Project edits (Coordinated student projects conducted by the Institute). 83% felt that following the structured Avid lesson plan was beneficial.

75% found the objectives of the lessons adequately covered. 75% felt that the outlined

steps helpful in completing the self-guided exercises. 92% found the Lesson Reviews helpful in re-capping the previous day's class. 73% felt that after completing the course, they now found it easier to finish their editing practicals / projects.

91% felt that the course introduced them to certain useful or new key features of the application which they now use extensively. 92% felt that after completing the course they would recommend the Avid curriculum over a deep dive (self-learning) approach. The writer observed certain improvements in the students' approach to sound editing

during the editing stage, which could be attributed to the course training specifically concentrating on sound editing concepts.

Avid Media Composer shares a lot of common sound editing tools with ProTools, (which is also an Avid Technology sound editing application). Project information can also be seamlessly transferred from Avid Media Composer to ProTools. The Avid Training course concentrates on this feature, and the supplied audio exercises stress on starting the soundtrack laying and levelling within the edit timeline in Media Composer, while the edit itself is going on. Basic mixing of audio tracks is also done at this stage.

The lessons also demonstrate how music levelling can enhance the editing process, and how the mixing and levelling tools in Media Composer can be utilized to formulate a rough sound design. This enhances the editing process a great deal. On finalizing the edit, the entire edited timeline can then be seamlessly transferred to ProTools, and this serves as a reference for the final sound design in ProTools.

## ■ CONCLUSIONS

The road ahead calls for improvements in areas such as course delivery and assessment of student work with a view to efficiency. As the present survey was within the campus, in future editing alumni students who are currently working in the postproduction industry in Mumbai, could be included in the survey, and poll them for feedback regarding the Avid training imparted in the institute as related to their industry experience using Avid Media Composer on feature film editing.

This will also enable us to gauge their long-term application of the learnings taught during the course. Their input would then generate valid guidelines regarding any grey

Another finding was that the lesson on troubleshooting technical problems empowered the students to deal with common issues that could crop up during the editing process. Routine issues such as recovery of data. Data loss due to a hard drive failure and the procedure of how to recover from it were covered. The students are now better equipped to deal with most postproduction related situations that they could face during projects.

Considering that Avid Media Composer has undergone Rapid Release software cycles recently and is constantly adding many key new features <sup>(11)</sup> with each successive release, it is important that students discover these new features which will speed up their workflow.

The poll verified this with 91% of respondents answering that the training introduced them to key features of the application which they now use extensively, and this had expanded their productivity.

areas that our training did not encompass, but regardless is of significance. Then we could incorporate such training into our syllabus. Further interaction between other Avid Certified Institutes, to compare experiences regarding the Avid course content delivery is also an exciting option which can be explored. It would be exceedingly useful to compare views on course delivery and results.

This paper is a work in progress. We are closely monitoring student feedback to fine tune the program. Further interaction with Avid Education is solicited with a view to cater to major technological changes that may occur in the future.

## ■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## ■ NOTES

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