



Meeting in the Educational Committee of Bachelor in Animation

Location:
Online and at The Animation
Workshop, Kasernevej 5, Viborg
(Big Meetingroom)

Meeting date:
Thursday, October 10, 2024
12.30-15.30

Participants

Julie Raunsmed Peitersen
Lise Saxtrup
Shelley Page
Mario Grosu
Gry Lindebjerg
Uriel Kranot
Karen Haldrup Lund Jakobsen
Chris Ebeling
Peter Dyring-Olsen
Sophie Refshauge Møller
Elodie Rose Denise Maddy Ducas
Camila Moreano-Nielsen

Tentative

Astrid Refstrup

Declined

Dorte-Pia Ravnsbæk, Magnus Møller, Kristina Sletting Jensen, Emile Gignoux

Guests

Freja Devantié, VIA Career Center
Trine Raaby, consultant, VIA Educational Development

SUMMARY/ AGENDA

Meeting chair:

Referent:
Anna-Maj Geyti

E: AGEY@via.dk
T: +4587554966

Date: 10 October 2024
J.no.: Insert j.no.
Ref.: Insert reference

1/8

Agenda

Minutes in Italic

1. Welcome

12.30-12.35 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

a. Welcome to new members

Niels Gram Riisgaard has withdrawn from the Student Council and the Educational Committee since he is in his last semester.

We have invited a new member to represent the game industry in the committee: Sophie Refshauge Møller, Art Director and Concept Artist at Funday Games.

We are welcoming new students' representatives: Elodie (3rd year, CA) and Camila (2nd year, CG). This will be Karen's last meeting.

b. Approval of agenda

The agenda is approved.

c. Election of meeting chair

Peter is elected as the meeting chair.

2. News from the bachelor department and head of studies

12.35-12.50 (Peter Dyring-Olsen and Anna-Maj Geyti)

a. Study year 2024-25

Current status: 209 ANIM students:

- 1st year: 54
- 2nd year: 56
- 3rd year: 50
- 4th year: 49

5 exchange students:

- 2 from Hochschule Luzern, Switzerland
- 1 from Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Germany
- 2 from Emily Carr U. of Art + Design, Canada

1ST YEAR – 1ST SEMESTER

The new students have arrived at TAW and are settling in:

- VAF, Animation History, Animation Basics (CA) and CG Art Software and Design.
- Class councils, Student council, party committee and clubs.

This year's study start: Not only intro weeks but something we work with throughout the whole year:

- Tutor activities in intro week and peer to peer talks during the year e.g. about exam and the transition from 1st Year to 2nd Year.
- Tour de Classrooms: Visits to each other to strengthen knowledge and friendship across years.
- Guides and inspiration to social events, e.g. potluck and "hyttetur"/study trips.
- Letters for coming students: What have I learned about starting my studies at TAW...

2ND YEAR – 3RD SEMESTER

- CA: Going into 3D
- CG: Designing a Creature and taking it through the full 3D-pipeline

3RD YEAR – 5TH SEMESTER

- Electives
- Portfolio
- Career planning
- 6th semester production

4TH YEAR – 7TH SEMESTER

- Internship
- Bachelor exam
- Graduation January 17, 2025. Save the date!

WHAT ARE WE WORKING ON IN THE BACHELOR DEPARTMENT?

- *Internal organization – clarity and teamwork*
 - *Ongoing educational development (reform)*
 - *Defining our research interests and focus areas*
 - *Career Learning (more later)*
 - *Exams – making sure that the exams test what we want them to*
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- *6th semester production*
 - *Separated elements*
 - *Applying our learning*
 - *7 projects*
 - *Supervision*
 - *We have already changed some elements to ease the schedule*
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- *Technological development – when do we choose to “jump on the bandwagon”*
 - *AI, Realtime, USD*

Chris suggests that the committee discuss AI and how it should be introduced to the students at an upcoming meeting. Chris offers to share his company's experiences with AI.

b. Introduction to VIA's new Software Engineer Program

The XR Software Engineering Program is a new bachelor program in VIA, which started up this semester with 21 students. The program is located at TAW. The program employs two teachers and will expand. The software program in Horsens is also providing teaching in the forthcoming semesters. We are looking into ways of collaborating with each other.

The students across the programs at TAW have already started collaborating on their own initiative with games development.

3. News from TAW

12.50-13.20 (Kasper Kruse)

a. NIMBI GameLab

Nimbi GameLab – Denmark's Institute for Game Development. This is the name of Denmark's new game institute, which Kasper Kruse is involved in establishing as head of the institute's board. The name refers to one of the first Danish digital games from 1963. The institute is the first of its kind in Europe and is established to support the Danish game industry. Read more about the institute here (in Danish only): [Europas første spilinstitut er i luften \(kum.dk\)](https://www.kum.dk/nyheder/2019/09/europas-første-spilinstitut-er-i-luften)

Minutes

The institute has been established. We have found a CEO, but due to a reshuffle in the government and the establishment of a new Ministry of Digitalization, there has been uncertainty about how the institute should be anchored. This has now been resolved, and the center remains anchored in the Ministry of Culture. Additionally, three new employees have been hired. The center's activities are funded by “Spilordningen” and the Finance Act. We aim to support talent development, assist in the startup of new companies, and contribute knowledge and awareness about the Danish game industry.

b. Reform of the professional bachelor programs in Denmark

2.1 billion DKK yearly is earmarked to the transformation of the professional bachelor programs (PBs). The PBs must be shortened with 15 ECTS credits. The Professionshøjskoler will develop 6 master programs (until now it has only been the universities, who could offer master programs).

4. News from the members

13.20-13.45 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

We would like to get a bit closer to what is happening in the industries related to our educational programs. Therefore, we would like the members to give a brief presentation at the meetings on how things are going in the industry – in general and particularly in relation to new technology, such as AI.

Julie will give a brief presentation at this meeting. After the presentations all members are welcome to discuss or give input to the topic.

Ja Film is a production studio based in Århus working with TV-series, features, motion design, theater shows, commercials and special effects for international cinema and Danish TV. <https://www.jafilm.dk/>

We change our pipeline according to projects, which means the employees need to have a skill set in various programs and be very versatile in their competences and in their ways of solving the tasks.

For Software and Technology it's important to use the tools on our premises.

We don't want the newest technology to dictate the look of a certain show. We need technology to help improve our vision, not make limits.

Concerning Artificial Intelligence, which is a broad term, it needs to be clear that it is already implemented automatically in most softwares (tracking, spell checking, automatic solutions etc.) So yes, we use it. Hard to avoid.

But with AI image- and video generators (Midjourney, Runway, Dall-e etc.) we can see a new tendency that some tasks are done directly by the client now, since artificial intelligence can easily be handled by “non creatives”.

It means some jobs are downscaled because of AI solutions, which can be beneficial for lower budgets, fast results and to skip some steps in production.

What we also see is a tendency of average results, mono-culture and less critical feedback on the final outcome.

The students should be introduced to AI to understand what it actually means. Not as a tool to skip knowledge and prompt create pictures, but to get an insight of all the nuances of the technology.

It is important they also get to know about rights (in general good to know), ethical dilemmas, lawsuits going on and the huge climate impact it has.

To get more knowledge it could be interesting to get a viewpoint from a datalog (computer scientist).

To have an expert who knows about the latest trends.

If possible lectures about what is happening world wide and have specific case studies.

As with any craftsmanship, the student will not benefit from skipping the basics of STB, Anim, BG etc. and use AI. They need to have foundational competencies, critical thinking, original creativity and experience.

As things are changing fast these years, it's hard to say where we stand next year.

Sophie: We can add from the gaming industry:. There are different approached to use it. Mobil game-studios use AI without hesitation, because it's about getting as much content out as possible.

Triple A are very hesitant, they have IPs to protect. Indie-companies have users who are against AI and expect a human's creativity behind the games. Everyone can use AI. Talk to the students about social responsibility, what is creativity/authenticity, talent development, ethical responsibility. You should make students that are better than AI. Sophie will share some research.

Peter: the ongoing debate of it is very important and there is a lot of aspect to discuss.

Chris: How do we futureproof our student? We need to be very close to the development and have the discussion – it is very emotionally for many.

5. VIA Career Center

13.45-14.00 (Freja Devantié, VIA Career Center)

Freja will introduce the committee to the activities VIA Career Center is hosting for the students at TAW/Animation.

Minutes

There are four employees in VIA's Career Center. They are partners with different educations in VIA. The career center/Freja offer a mix of mandatory and optional activities catered to the students at TAW targeted both the international and the Danish industry.

- 1. Long term goals – Career Center perspective: to support and strengthen the students' ability to find jobs when finishing their studies. How:*
 - a. strategic career plans*
 - b. career management skills.*
- 2. Specific career activities: We will spread them out during the program instead of offering them at the last semesters, so the students learn the skills and have time to practice them.*
 - a. Career management skills: networking, making a cv, tools for structured internship search. Putting your social and personal skills into words. E.g.: workshop with skills in focus: CV and cover letter. How did we practice this skill:*
 - i. Workshop with HK (unemployment insurance fund)*
 - ii. Working on CV and cover letter in our Online Career Universe*
 - iii. Receiving feedback on the CV and cover letter.*
 - b. Meeting the industry & other examples:*
 - i. Event: "Meet your future" - A collaboration with Viborg Animation Festival. Inspirational talk + informal network session.*
=> a safe space to practice network skills. (they had a workshop on this in the spring) and a place to expand their network by meeting companies.
- 3. If you would like to collaborate with Freja and the Career Center, please reach out: deva@via.dk.*

BREAK

14.00-14.10

6. News from the chairperson

14.10-14.20 (Julie Raunsmed Peitersen)

Julie participates in a meeting for all chairpersons of the educational committees in VIA. Julie will present the content of this meeting.

Julie presented the discussions she participated in at the meeting and reviewed the rector's presentation of the government's proposal for reforming the university colleges.

Points:

- TAW is different from other programs at VIA. TAW's students don't drop out; they move to Viborg, and there is diversity among the students. Many other programs struggle with this. TAW has the problem of getting graduates employed, while other programs have a high demand for their graduates.
- All programs are dealing with industry shock – meaning it is hard for the graduates to transition from studies to work. Self-realization can be a part of your job, too.
- How can the programs share inspiration and knowledge? And how can the industry have an impact on the students / be in contact with the students? What can be done between the meetings to get a bigger impact from the educational committees?

Reform elements (a suggestion for decision – not in law yet):

1. Profession-oriented quality improvement
 - a. Implement more teaching from the industry. Get part-time teachers from the industry (a mix).
2. Flexible education for more people
3. Continuing and further education

All programs will have to give up 15 ECTS credits.

We need to figure out what the consequences are for our programs and what role the educational committees should play.

Peter: They want to change the professional bachelor's programs so they resemble more the way we conduct education at TAW: More hours, industry involvement, feedback, shorter bachelor project. We need to remove 15 ECTS and cannot take them all from the bachelor project, so we need to look at our full programs. It will be a challenge to develop our internship: 6 months and more committed collaboration with the industry. We can have a role in VIA in terms of inspiring other programs.

Note: More information on the reform can be found at the Ministry of Research and Education website (in Danish): [Ny reform skal få flere til at vælge en professions- eller erhvervsrettet videregående uddannelse — Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet](#)

7. A Novel Approach to Digital Storytelling: Integrating Traditional Storyboarding with AI-Driven Applications

14.20-14.35 (Uri Kranot)

Uri will present a new and exciting collaboration between VIA UC R&D Center for Animation and TAW's Bachelor education; the research project engages animation students under an internship scheme. The research explores a hybrid methodology for digital storytelling, combining traditional storyboarding techniques with emerging computer-generated tools. Outcomes include development of an enhanced curriculum for storyboarding, as well as a publication of a paper as part an EU-funded initiative.

The AI-centered research project is designed around a relevant industry case-study and focused on the production of a storyboard for an animated feature film, an adaptation from a graphic novel.

Under the guidance of experienced mentors, the internship initiative emphasizes professional development through practical and project-based learning. The project work involves storyboarding tasks, framed within the context of TAW's FoU research lab, and aims to investigate the application of Machine Learning in creative and artistic workflows.

Uri presented the research project, which involved students interning as researchers, and some very early conclusions:

- The potential of incorporating machine learning abilities and storyboard artists unique style is enormous.
- So far- The tools are suiting commercial work, ad agency, presentations, product placements etc. They are not tailored for the creative film industry yet*.
- Following the rapid progression of AI tech, it seems these apps will shortly be added as integral tool within the filmmaking and animation pipeline.
- Moral and legal issues are not being addressed yet.
- Teaching visualization methods with AI needs to address both textual and image vocabulary.

The presentation sparked a discussion about the use of AI and how students should learn to use AI:

Lise: What is the discussion among the students about the use of AI?

Karen: People are reluctant, and we are discussing it all the time. Students are not interested in learning to use AI and prompting; they are interested in learning the craft. Someone who really likes to animate might use AI for rigging, but if you like storyboarding, you prefer to do it yourself, just like painting.

Elodie: It would be very relevant to know how studios and artists use AI – to get examples. The learning part needs to be integrated in a way that shows the craft is still very much in use and needs to be developed.

Chris: It is the industry's responsibility to research what is needed and apply that to the curriculum for the students' benefit. The craft is key, but AI is increasingly controlled, so it can be used. Students need to be introduced to it.

Karen: Please ensure that students are on board if you implement it in the curriculum because we are here to learn the craft.

Kasper: Industry professionals, help us by showing examples.

Julie: For many projects it is not possible to share development because of NDA's.

Sophie: My Head of Studio, is currently working on a written summary of the conversations he has had with various other Danish game companies about their relationship with AI. I will send a follow-up when we have something we can share. In the meantime, here is a study from BCG: [GenAI Increases Productivity & Expands Capabilities | BCG](#)

It is a study based on the Data Scientist industry and whether AI can be used to augment employees - interesting results, although not 100% overlapping with the creative industry, where one does not always work with an objective answer. Even in a more logically founded industry, the main point is that it cannot be used profitably without fundamental knowledge of one's field - and that it also has negative consequences for junior employees and learning.

8. Input to the upcoming meetings in the committee

14.35-14.55 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

The Educational Committees are an important source of information on the development of the job market and the professions. The ambition is to create a systematic reflux of information from the Educational Committees to the programmes and VIA's management. This includes continuous considerations of the job market's competence requirements, the quality of the programmes, etc. The ambition is to bring the Educational Committees into play as consulting collaborators for the management by involving them in the processes in due course where the Committees can influence the processes and decisions and not only be briefed on these.

To meet the ambition and promote productive meetings in the future, we would like to hear members' input and wishes regarding both the content and format of upcoming meetings. What would you like to focus on,

and how can the meetings be structured in a way that ensures they are as valuable as possible for all participants?

Due to lack of time, this point was not discussed. Instead, Peter will send out a mail with questions to the committee.

9. Denmark's 2023 Study Survey

14.55-15.25 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

The survey "Denmark Study Survey" is conducted every other year among students and recent graduates from higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. The results provide information on students' and graduates' assessments of the quality and relevance of their education programs. Peter will present the results from Denmark's Study Survey relating to Graphic Storytelling.

Please find the results attached to this agenda.

Due to lack of time, this point was not discussed. Instead, Peter will send out a mail with the results.

10. AOB

15.25-15.30

Need for competences in the industry

As an elaboration on the point on news from the program Lise and Chris referred to two different projects about needs for competences in the industry:

a. Mapping of educational programs for the Danish game industry 2024

Lise referred to a report about the identifying the educational foundation for the game industry in Denmark conducted by Filmby Aarhus and The Animation Workshop/VIA. The mapping evaluates 75 programs and their ECTS weighting in the context of the game industry. The conclusions are outlined and the report can be downloaded here: [Rapport - Uddannelse i spil: Kortlægning af uddannelsesudbud til den danske spilbranche 2024 \(via.dk\)](#)

b. Paneurama

Chris introduced Paneurama – a research about skills and competences in the industry with the aim of bridging the gap between educations and industry.

Read more about Paneurama here: [Home - PANEURAMA](#) and the recent research conclusions – a report on soft skills and competences: [PANEURAMA Report: Work Environment Dynamics and Soft Skills in Animation, Games and VFX industries - PANEURAMA](#)

Next year will focus on entrepreneurship in the field and the last year will focus on hard skills. AI will be a part of this. One of the key findings is the need of a train the trainer-program: how can the educators keep up their competences and contact to the Industry (development).

Graduation

We will host the graduation screening and reception on the 17th of January, 2025. Please save the date if you would like to join the celebration.