**CILECT CONFERENCE 2011 / FAMU, PRAGUE**

**“EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF FILM & MEDIA EDUCATION”**

**BENCHMARKING WIKIPEDIA**

**Like all good media students, began my research on Wikipedia. The derivation of the concept of benchmaking is that shoemakers would put the customer’s foot on the bench and make a mark around either foot, in order to know what size to make the shoe.**

**CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN TWO SCENARIOS**

**Want to emphasise that I am approaching this very much from a common or garden lecturer’s perspective :**

**Not a dean or a rector or a head of a film school : I teach every day, so I am making this presentation from the perspective of how I am encountering benchmarking on the shop floor.**

**Both scenarios entail us ensuring that our ethos and practical focus is industry facing.**

**FIRSTLY, DEVELOPING AN MA IN FACTUAL MEDIA / WILDLIFE FILM MAKING WITH BBC FACTUAL AND THE BBC NATURAL HISTORY UNIT**

**Working in conjunction with the BBC, so that the course that we design can map onto their own standards and protocols.**

**MA in Wildlife Film making will be one of only two courses in Europe.**

**Scenario comes out of the Anchor Bristol project between the City of Bristol, UWE and the BBC : to ensure the foundation and sustainable development of creative and cultural activity within the city.**

**Emphasis on professional partnerships.**

**We have to write our programme specification and validation documentation in a way that the BBC understands : but also we have to write them in a way that observes some of their own institutional standards and protocols.**

**SECONDLY, UWE APPLYING FOR SKILLSET ACCREDITATION**

**“Skillset is the industry body which supports skills and training for people and businesses to ensure the UK creative industries maintain their world class position.”**

**“Skillset is the Creative Industries' Sector Skills Council (SSC) which comprises TV, film, radio, interactive media, animation, computer games, facilities, photo imaging, publishing, advertising and fashion and textiles.”**

**Also worth mentioning that all HE courses in the UK have to go through QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) : interestingly Media Practice is part of the Art & Design QAA not Media Cultural Communications.**

**3 Skillset Film Academies in the UK and 23 Media Academies**

**UWE applying as a Media Academy that will incorporate course in Photography, Graphic Design, Fashion, Animation and Fine Art.**

**Skillset : mapping the media practice curriculum against National Occupational Standards.**

**Skillset are inviting us to apply as a Skillset academy.**

**Skillset as kitemarking**

**Demonstrating that the content of the course delivers against NOS is a reassurance for industry : essentially an assurance of quality.**

**Process that we submit all our documentation by 16th January.**

**National Occupational Standards but also looking at creative briefs, production processes, quality of student work, dissemination of work.**

**Then Skillset visit UWE in May**

**PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT VERSUS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

**Make it too performance based and it becomes reductive.**

**Make it too cerebral and it loses any contact with reality, let alone the jobs market.**

**But need to ensure that there is a space to reward qualities like creativity, imagination, good storytelling, risk taking, theoretical understanding, and deeper thinking.**

**Ideally NOS will be embedded within the broader creative production brief.**

**But also presumably not just abut measuring and assuring standards but actually improving them.**

**BOTH SCENARIOS DEMAND A MORE INDUSTRY FACING APPROACH**

**I think we’re all very clear that we want our students to be employable : we want them to have a strong chance of actually working in this industry.**

**And also there is undeniably a real audit culture in the UK : an anglo-saxon rationalistic obsession with measuring, naming and categorizing everything.**

**But we also want to preserve the more thoughtful, creative and cerebral aspects of what we do : and some of these qualities remain immeasruarable.**

**And actually these two things are intrinsically interlinked. We should be producing graduates with editorial and creative vision, which will only come through the kind of education that engages on a deeper level.**

**The trick is to find a good marriage between the demands of industry and the free creative space that a film school environment can offer.**

**RETURN TO THE FOOT ANALOGY**

**How well will the shoe fit ? Will it feel like the beginning of a long acquaintance or will we develop bunions, feel uncomfortable, and in the worst case scenario inhibit our ability to walk properly ?**

**Need to preserve the free creative space of the film school environment, whilst**

**acknowledging the requirements and the opportunities that this kind of benchmarking can offer, particularly in terms of the employability prospects of the young people on our courses.**