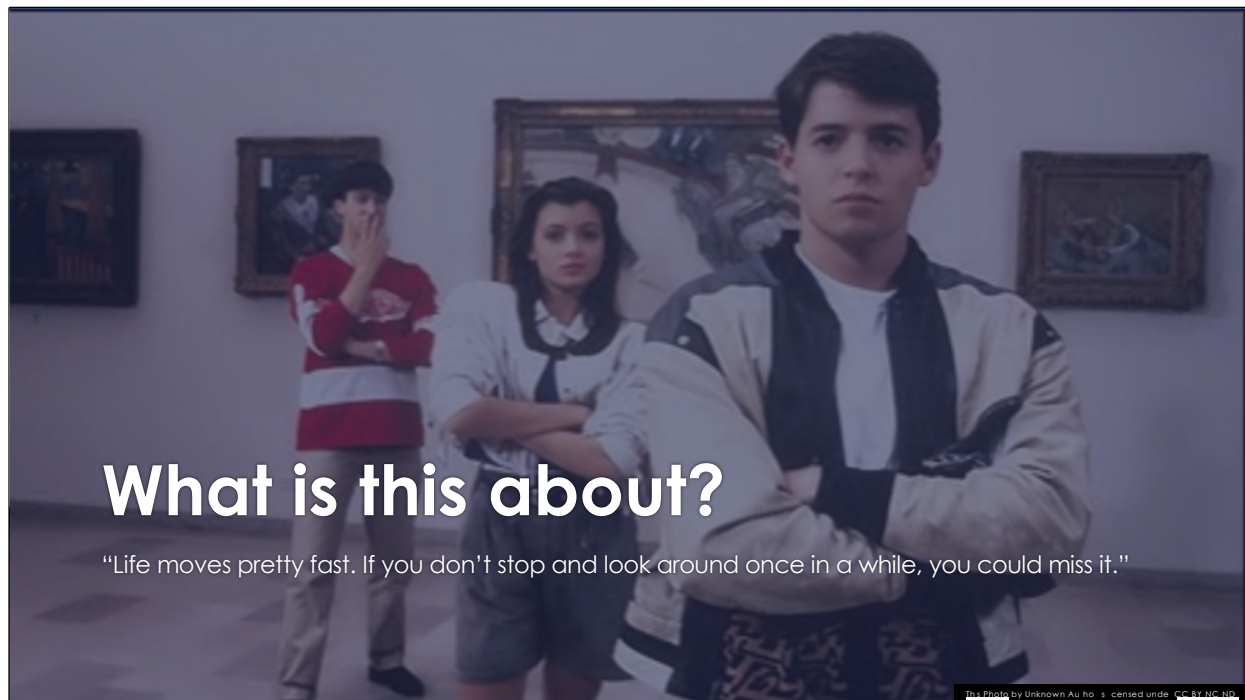




Co-Creation in Practical Film Education in Undergraduate Study

An Autoethnographic Presentation

title



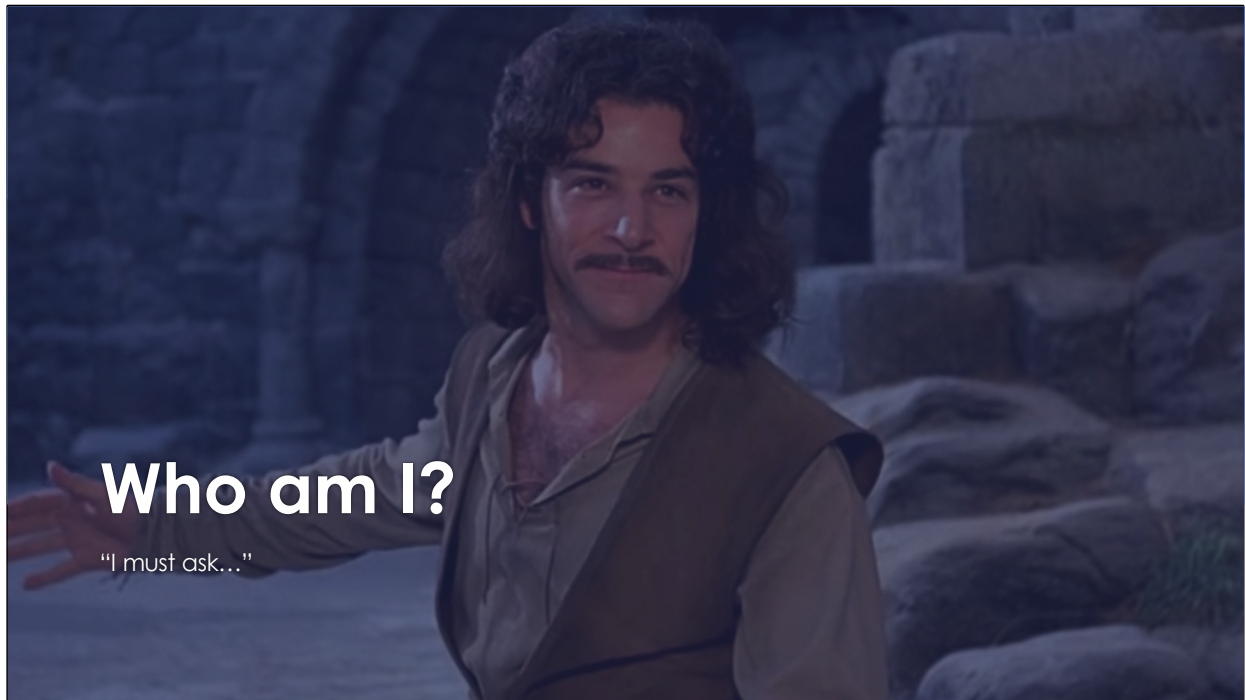
What is this presentation about?

This is a reflective presentation considering the ongoing discourse around film education and co-creation...

...or...how student practical filmmaking can be mediated, contributed to, or advised by lecturers and the role that undergraduate film lecturers may take in co-creation using first-hand experience as an undergraduate lecturer and as an external advisor.

I've primarily found that by looking at Chamber's (2019) and Mateer's (2019) articles my own thoughts are somewhat reflected in those – but I want to stress that

these are not fixed answers, just ideas based on reflections whilst being an EE.

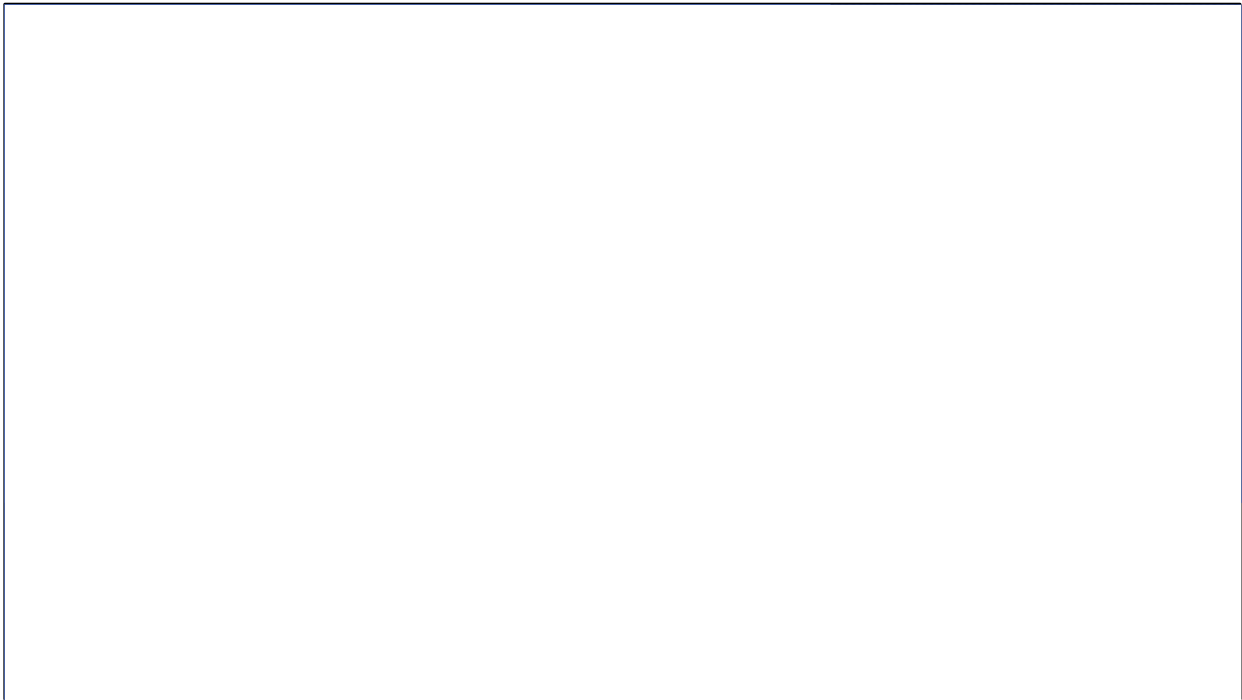


Who am I?

15 years in tv and film industry

Past 9 years in HE teaching, and have researched and written 3 degrees in that time.

And I've spent the past year as an External Examiner at UCEN Manchester for the BA (Hons) Film Production and Content Creation



I started an an EE as I wanted to understand how other uni's and colleges were approaching undergraduate film education, collaborative practice, and recruitment successfully as I'd already tracked a downward trend of recruitment for the past 8 years here at the UCG.

Reviewing Chamber's (2019) collaborative development of practical film teaching and practice in undergraduate education as a reflective tool to help review my own practice when advising students on their work.

For the first few years of teaching I acted as a lecturer across all film student work (wherever possible) – and I was often worried about leading the student in their work. This draws on parallels with Chambers experience where there could be a quasi-auteurist pollution of student work – although this is unintentional (it assumes that the student will often do the work in a way to try and get the best mark rather than have the best production experience)

Over the past 5-6 years I have become more a “Creative Producer” – advising on ideas and recommend certain courses of action are taken based on my own experience in industry. (Again, reflecting Chamber's [ibid] and Mateer's (2019)

experience).

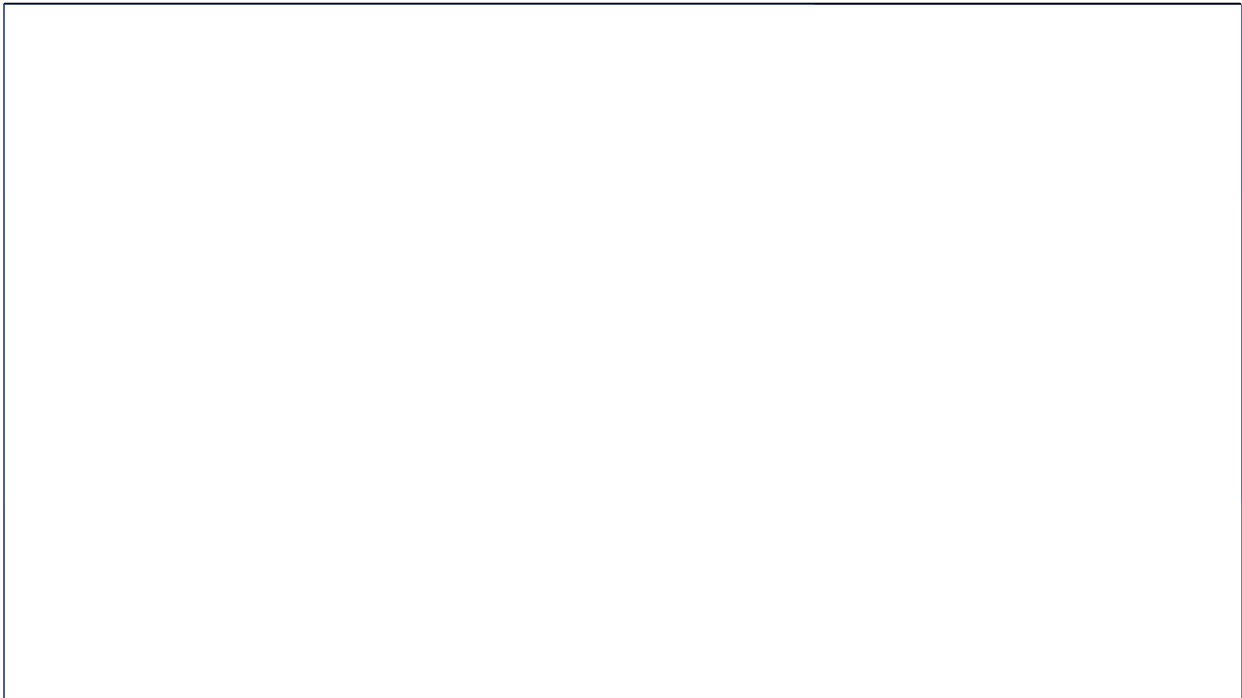


Since becoming an EE at UCEN Manchester (who's students mirror our own as they are college-based HE provider dealing with students from poor socio-economic backgrounds), I have witnessed a different approach to the Creative Producer role.

They have a similar approach to myself, in that during pre-production and post they advise and recommend certain courses of action. They do not lead the students, but allow the students to creative problem solve their own work and advise best practice throughout.

However, when in production of a short film the lecturer in charge of the project oversees and observes the crew when filming (both on location and when filming in two of their studios, during evenings and weekends).

This contrasts how we tend to work with students possibly due to our own H&S/safeguarding rules. (when I refer to "we", it is just myself)



This is possible as they have different rules surrounding their Higher Education students.

They have moved to fundamentally make their film academy degree and marking about observing practice (mirroring how the PGCE operates here).

They have a team of experienced degree lecturers that oversee two/three productions each semester (each year has two production lecturers attached to oversee the films, as well as 2 academic lecturers). They mark the students skills in a particular role against a set of criteria that differs for each role. For example, a camera op is marked against their abilities in grip work, basic camera operation, communication skills, team work, etc.

This has raised a discussion about how moderation of marks are completed when observing students on location – something that I have discussed with the UCEN team. I have also noticed that they do not consider the film project as part of the assessment – that is immaterial for the project itself.



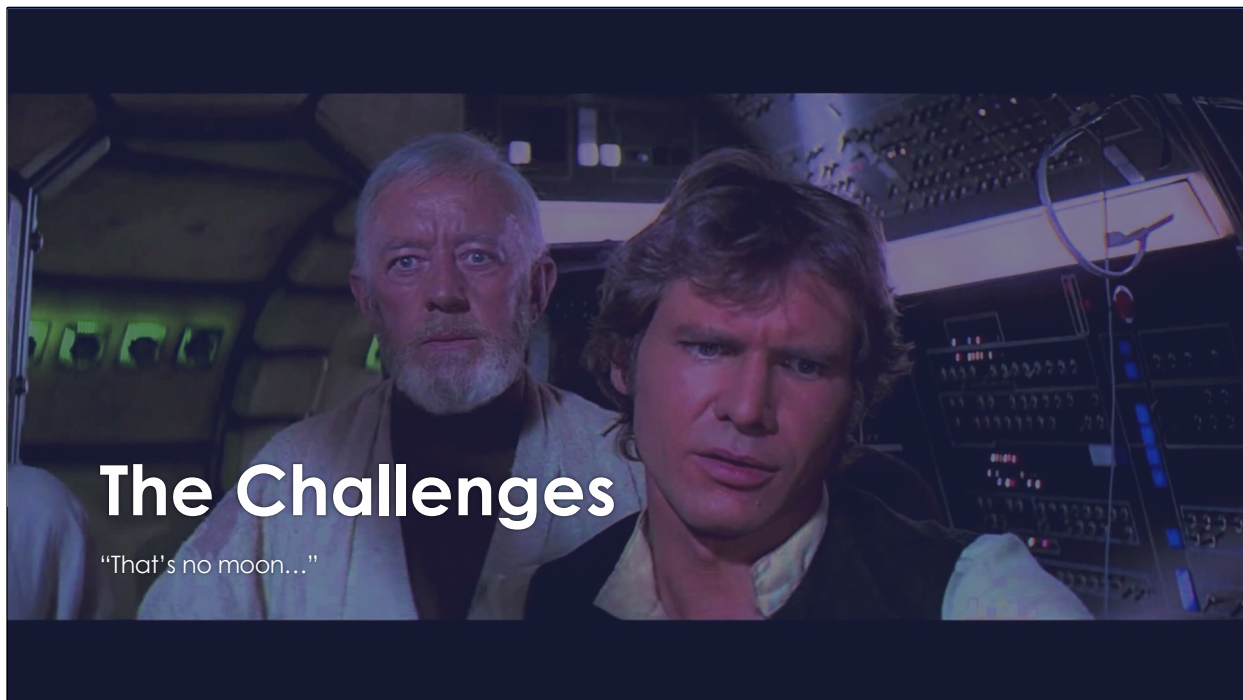
This approach interests me, as it is much more hands-on and reflects industry practice.

Considering an observed approach, some of the suggestions by Dollinger and Lodge (2020), as well as suggestions by BFI (in their report into the state of High End TV): Such as moving away from lecturer led sessions allowing students to take a more active lead in their projects (which I think I do already)
Allowing more time for co-creation without the limitations of time/deadlines (maybe move to yearlong projects? Maybe have 12-week projects splitting the Trimesters? Observed practice sessions?)

Further to this:

It could encourage student film makers to be risk takers in their approaches (more entrepreneurial?)

This can then be used to attract students to our film centred degrees (possible side effect?).

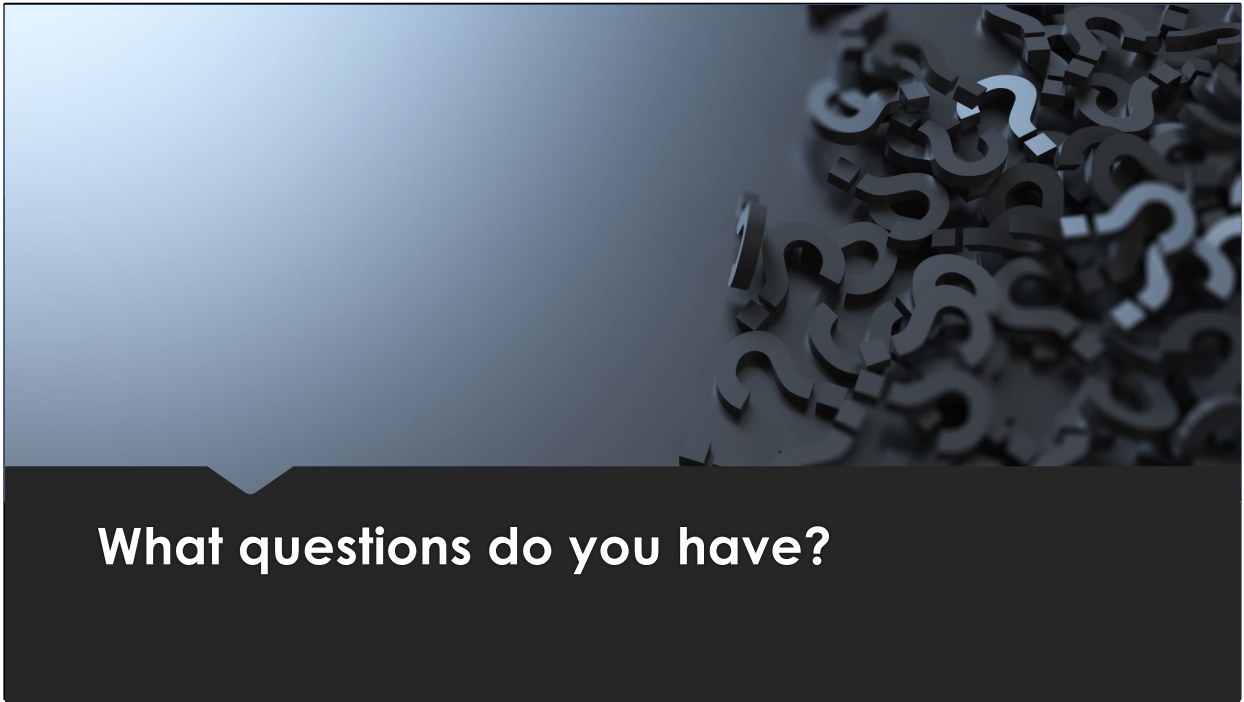


- There are challenges to this approach here at the UCG:
 - We have a much smaller delivery team (just me) and far higher benchmark hours - which limits what we can do (Solutions could include moving to 10-week trimesters that start at the end of Sept, hiring extra relevantly experienced staff, reduce current benchmark to allow for more flexibility).
 - I considered how to approach this on site - We lack the facilities to manage this on site (no film production studio).
 - We lack the flexibility to allow staff to run workshops on location unless extra paperwork is completed by both the staff and the students – meaning this can deter participants (The college do have paperwork, but the public liability is also extended to allow this)
 - There is also a challenge where we as film educators must ask how much co-creation/advice has gone into an undergraduate film without being completely led by ourselves, and negatively impacting the students experience and grades. (Chambers mentions this) I have experienced this as students will sometimes prefer to be led rather than creative problem solve.
 - I have discussed this with the UCEN team – they only observe and

advise, but there are ongoing discussion on how this is moderated.



- Co-creation within undergraduate filmmaking is something to aspire towards. Practice-orientated filmmaking is something to aspire towards within a Screen Academy once we have better collaboration between degrees like Digital Film and SFX as well as new degrees/pathways in Screenwriting, Screen Acting, and Digital Craft Productions and investment in our facilities – but this could be years away – but it does not mean we should stop the discussion.
- There are options to add some optional and collaborative modules to the film degree in a few years' time to begin to develop a more flexible approach to film education.
- These are just starting points to how undergraduate film education could develop – there is no “perfect” solution – just options for me to try as the course develops over the next few years.



Any Questions?

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