

UNIVERSITY OF
TELEVISION AND FILM
MUNICH, GERMANY



Teaching Cinematography

An International Inquiry
among Cinematographers

Center for Advanced Studies of Film Technology
University of Television and Film Munich

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In Cooperation with **IMAGO**

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Munich, August 2018

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In Cooperation with IMAGO
European Federation of Cinematographers

Table of Content

Concept	5
Preliminary remark	5
Target	5
Participants	6
Outline.....	6
Implementation	6
Participation.....	7
Evaluation.....	7
Acknowledgement	7
Results	9
Module 1: Working Conditions as a Cinematographer	9
Question 1.1: In which country do you have your main residence?	10
Question 1.2: Are you a member of one of the following professional associations? .	12
Question 1.2.1: In none of the above, but in the following professional association: .	14
Question 1.3: What were your main fields of activity as a cinematographer in the production years 2015/2016/2017?	14
Question 1.4: Which camera types did you use how often in your films during the last three years?	15
Conclusions Module 1: Your working conditions as a cinematographer.....	16
Module 2: Teaching Conditions	17
Question 2.1: At which types of universities / institutions do you teach how many days per year in average?	18
Question 2.2: In which service or contractual relationship do you teach?	18
Conclusions Module 2: Teaching Conditions	19
Module 3: Teaching Subjects	21
Question 3.1: Which topics do you teach?	22
Question 3.2: Which types of cameras did you use how often in your classes during the years 2015/2016/2017?.....	23
Question 3.3: Which importance does the use of photochemical film have in your classes today?	23
Question 3.4: Which changes did your teaching undergo due to the digitalization of the image taking, respectively the omission of photochemical film?	24

Question 3.5: How do you judge the use of classical photochemical film for education in the future?	26
Question 3.6: Which changes occurred in your teaching due to the following new technologies?	31
Question 3.7: Topic "Ecological Sustainability @ Cinematography":	32
Question 3.8: The following initiatives, film technologies, research projects, institutions, experts or contacts should be taken into account when approaching the topic "Sustainability@Cinematography":	32
Conclusions Module 3: Teaching Subjects	32
Module 4: Teaching Methods	37
Question 4.1: Do you teach on the basis of content-methodical agreements with the University/ the lecture organizer?	38
Question 4.2: How long do you work on the preparation and follow-up of your classes?.....	38
Question 4.3: Do you get payed for preparation and follow-up time?	39
Question 4.4: In which group constellations do you teach?.....	39
Question 4.5: How big are your groups of students/lecture participants?	40
Question 4.6: With which written/ pictorial teaching materials do you teach?	40
Question 4.7: How do you teach your practical classes?.....	41
Question 4.8: Where does the equipment for your seminars originate from?.....	43
Question 4.9: Are there exams for your lessons?.....	43
Question 4.10: Which significance do those exams have?	44
Conclusions module 4: Teaching Methods	44
Module 5: Students.....	47
Question 5.1: What subjects do the participants of your courses study?	48
Question 5.2: What is the academic framework of your lecturers?.....	49
Question 5.3: How do you get a feedback for your lectures?	49
Conclusions Module 5: Students.....	50
Module 6: Personal Relation to Teaching	51
Question 6.1: How did you start your teaching?	52
Question 6.2: When did you give your first lecture?	52
Question 6.3: How did you develop your teaching methods?	53
Conclusions Module 6: Personal Relation to Teaching.....	53

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

Module 7: Tell us Your Story!.....	55
Question 7.1: How was your very first course?	56
Question 7.2: What was your best experience in one of your courses?	65
Question 7.3: What was the biggest disaster in one of your courses?	76
Question 7.4: Which of your own examples of teaching worked especially well?.....	84
Question 7.5: If you could start again today: What would you do differently with your entry into teaching?	94
Do you want to be named as the author of your answers 7.1 through 7.5? (All your other information in other modules remain anonymous in any case!).....	100
Conclusions Module 7: Tell us Your Story!.....	100
Module 8: Concluding Questions	103
Question 8.1: Do you wish for advanced training opportunities specifically for your teaching?.....	104
Do you have special wishes for trainings (Camerawork or Teaching methods)?	104
Question 8.2: Did you participate in... ..	106
Conclusions Module 8: Concluding Questions.....	106
Do you have final comments to this survey or to the topic teaching cinematography?	108
Recapitulation of the Results	111
1. Working Conditions as a Cinematographer	111
2. Teaching Conditions	112
3. Teaching Subjects.....	112
4. Teaching Methods.....	112
5. Students	115
6. Personal Relation to Teaching.....	118
7. Tell us Your Story!	119
8. Concluding Questions	120
Outlook.....	122
Appendix	123
About the Authors.....	124
Peter C. Slansky	124
Katrin Richthofer	125
Index of Societies	126

Concept

Preliminary Remark to the native English speakers

The authors see the answers of all the participants in this inquiry as a treasure, with themselves as its humble custodians. So, dear native English speakers, please keep in mind, that the authors did all this in their second language – as well as the wide majority of your participating colleagues...

Target

The target of this inquiry of the Center for Advanced Studies of Film Technology of the University of Television and Film Munich in Cooperation with IMAGO was an international overview about the teaching of cinematography done by cinematographers. This should cover various topics, from working conditions via teaching subjects and teaching methods through to the personal and individual approach of the participants. Included were the influences of new technologies as well as traditional ones, the institutional frameworks for teaching and the personal motivation for teaching.

In this inquiry „cinematography“ means the composition of moving images for fictional and documentary movies and TV productions including commercials, corporate TV, TV studio and remote pickup productions as well as free artistic productions that show the main features of the former.

The initial point for this study was the fact that cinematography is taught most commonly by professionals with recent creative experience in film and TV. Hence, they are professional cinematographers but (mostly) self-taught teachers. Many cinematographers teach at various institutions in parallel. Therefore the differences in the institutional frameworks were considered as well.

The typology of institutions that offer courses for cinematography has a rich variety including State or Private Film Academies or Schools of Design, film departments of private or state Creative Schools, Universities, or Academies of fine arts or performing arts, commercial or non-commercial training centers, broadcast academies and so on.¹ Due to the variety of the institutions the students of cinematography are not necessarily regular students, they may be professional DoPs, camera assistants or trainees. The variety of attendees means another demand for the teachers of cinematography.

¹ See (in German) Slansky, Peter C.: *Filmhochschulen in Deutschland. Geschichte – Typologie – Architektur*, VDG-Verlag Weimar, 2011

To avoid confusion: In the following text the learners of cinematography will generally be addressed as “students”, while “participants” means the cinematographers participating in this inquiry.

Participants

This inquiry was aimed at cinematographers who were in professional business for fictional and documentary movies and TV productions including commercials, corporate TV, TV studio and remote pickup productions and free artistic productions with similar key features in the years 2015/2016/2017 and who were teaching cinematography in the same period of time.

Outline

The inquiry was structured in eight question modules:

Module 1: Working Conditions as a Cinematographer

Module 2: Teaching Conditions

Module 3: Teaching Subjects

Module 4: Teaching Methods

Module 5: Students

Module 6: Personal Relation to Teaching

Module 7: Tell us Your Story!

Module 8: Concluding Questions

According to the respective topic, the questions were framed for single or multiple answers, as rating questions or as open questions for free text answers. Most of the multiple choice questions offered the opportunity of an alternative free text answer. The kind of question is indicated in each case as well as the actual number of participants in this question.

Implementation

The concept was set up by Peter C. Slansky, executive Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film Munich (HFF), and Katrin Richthofer, Center for Advanced Studies of Film Technology (SFT) of the HFF Munich, in close cooperation with Prof. Tony Costa, Lisbon, chairman of the Educational Board of IMAGO – European Federation of Cinematographers. Thus, the membership of the participants in one or more cinematographers’ societies was included. The potential participants in this survey were addressed via IMAGO and the national cinematographers’ societies. Additionally, there were announcements by CILECT, the International Society of Film-schools.

The implementation and evaluation of the online survey in an English and a German version was done by Katrin Richthofer.

Participation

Over all 125 cinematographers from 40 states all over the world took part in the survey, giving 13.720 answers in total. 106 participants used the English version, 19 the German version. Most participants did not answer every question, so for each question the actual participation is indicated.

Evaluation

The survey was done with umfrageonline by enovo software, Zurich. All data sets were accepted in which at least the obligatory questions were answered. The two language versions were consolidated. Because all participants were asked for his or her nationality national, differences could be detected precisely. (As a general result it turned out, that there were only very few.) Every set of data of each participant was treated anonymously and, of course, with equal weight in the statistic calculation.

In the interpretation of the bar graphs it has to be taken into account that the medium lines of the grey bars represent the arithmetic average. Additionally the average values are marked with red dots that are interconnected by red lines. The widths of the grey bars represent the standard deviation. So, wide grey bars mean a big heterogeneity of opinions, narrow grey bars mean a big consensus. The grey bars may be cut off at the maximum or the minimum value. Please note also differences in the scale and direction of the graphs.

Most of the free text answers (not all) are presented in this report. They were corrected for orthography (to the best of our knowledge...), but with the individual writing style of the author being kept (what required compromises in some cases). In the English version of the report the German free text answers are translated to English (what is indicated), in the German version of this report the English free text answers are kept in their original language.

More specified answers concerning the results of the survey can be asked from the SFT.

Acknowledgement

We like to say “Thank you” to all participants for their input and dedication. We also thank Tony Costa, IMAGO, and all who gave us their advice and feedback for the conception of the survey. Acknowledgements go to IMAGO and all the national cinematographers’ societies and to CILECT for their valuable communication and forwarding of our call-up.

Results

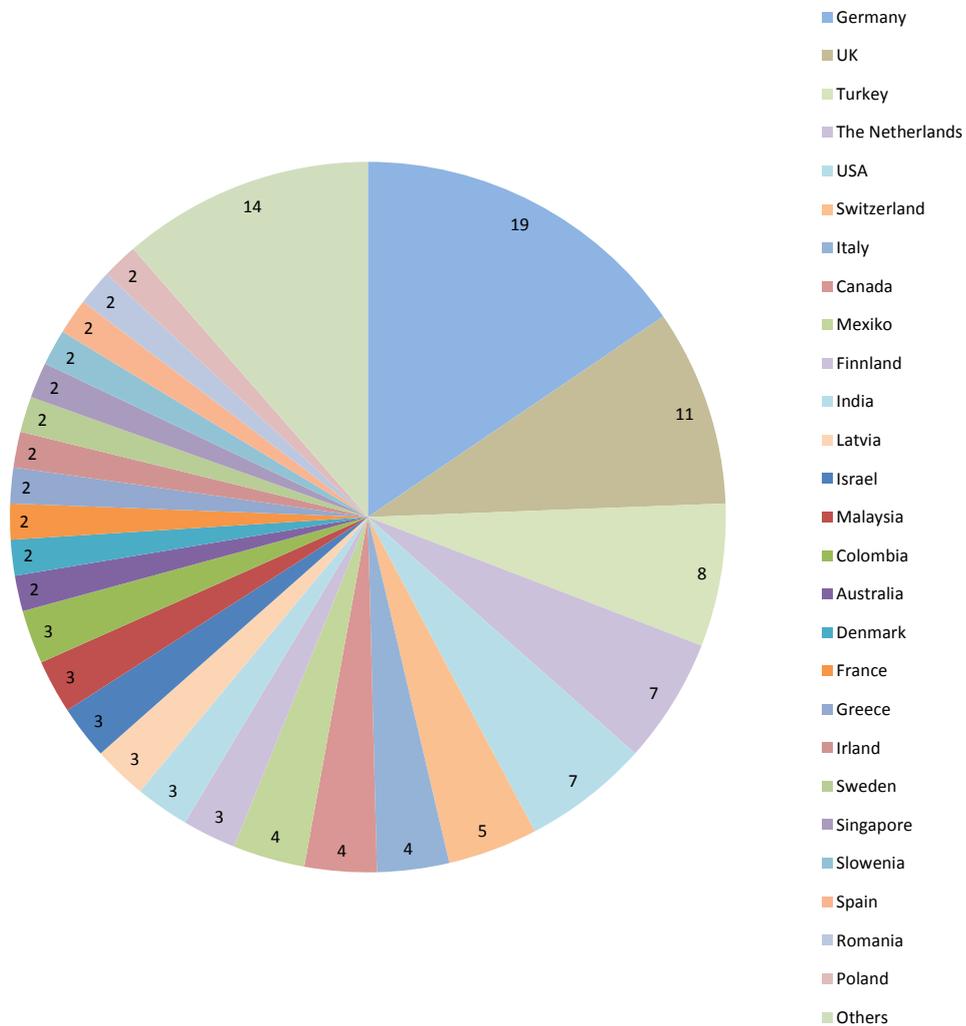
Module 1: Working Conditions as a Cinematographer

Over all, 125 cinematographers from 40 states all over the world took part in the survey, giving 13.720 answers. 106 participants used the English version, 19 the German version. Not all participants did answer every question, so for each question the actual participation is indicated.

Question 1.1: In which country do you have your main residence?

Single answer question

123 answers



Germany

19

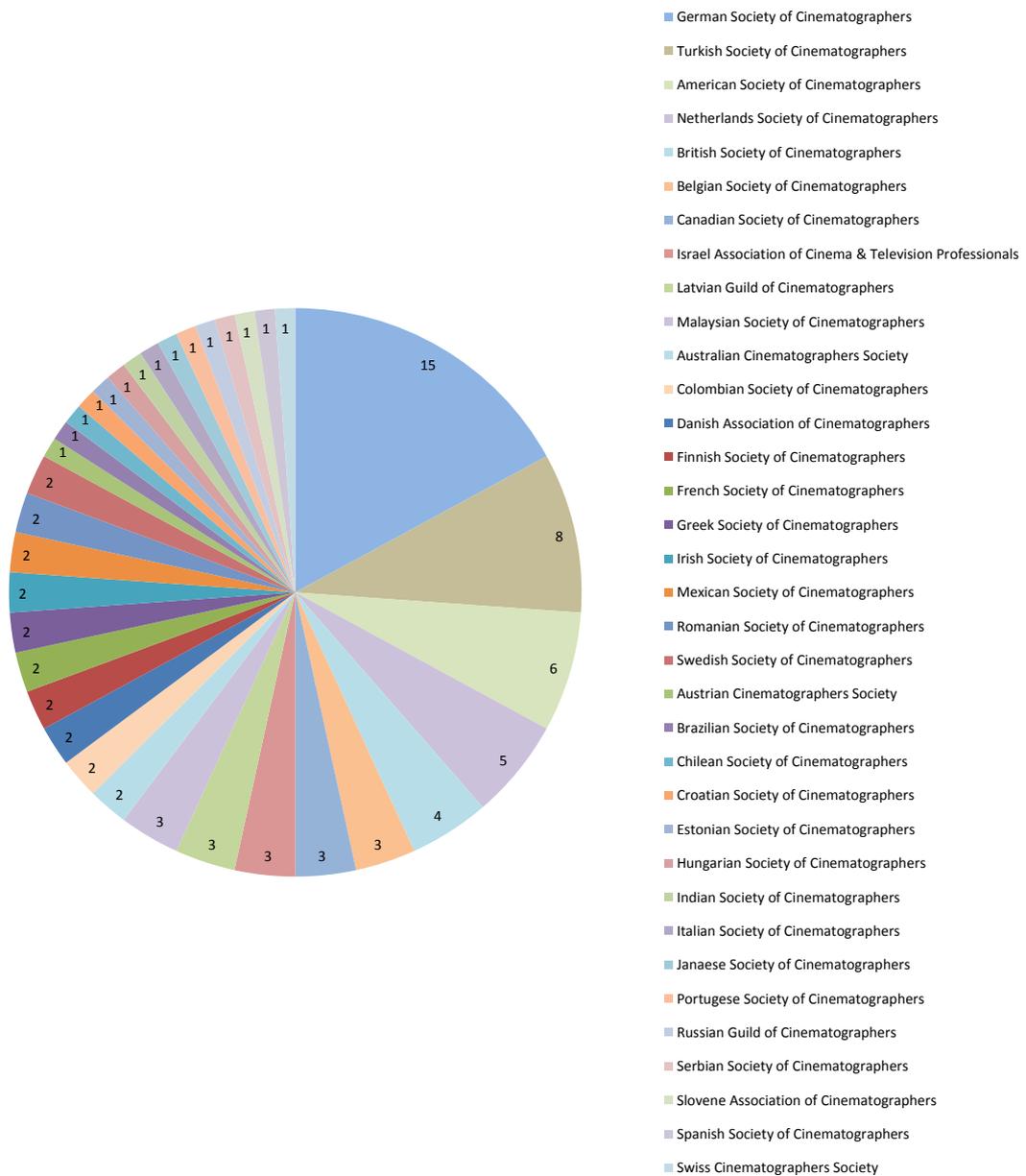
Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

United Kingdom	11
Turkey	8
The Netherlands	7
USA	7
Switzerland	5
Canada	4
Italy	4
Mexico	4
Columbia	3
Finland	3
India	3
Israel	3
Latvia	3
Malaysia	3
Australia	2
Denmark	2
France	2
Greece	2
Ireland	2
Poland	2
Romania	2
Singapore	2
Slowenia	2
Spain	2
Sweden	2
Austria	1
Belgium	1
Brazil	1
Chile	1
Croatia	1
Ecuador	1
Estonia	1
Hong Kong	1
Hungary	1
Japan	1
Lebanon	1
Portugal	1
Russia	1
Serbia	1

Question 1.2: Are you a member of one of the following professional associations?

Single answer question

88 answers



Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

88 of 125 participants declared to be a member in a national cinematographers' society. Some were also member in other societies.

German Society of Cinematographers BVK	15
Turkish Society of Cinematographers TSC	8
American Society of Cinematographers ASC	6
Netherlands Society of Cinematographers NSC	5
British Society of Cinematographers BSC	4
Belgian Society of Cinematographers SBC	3
Canadian Society of Cinematographers CSC	3
Israel Association of Cinema & Television Professionals ACT	3
Latvian Guild of Cinematographers LGC	3
Malaysian Society of Cinematographers MySC	3
Australian Cinematographers Society ACS	2
Colombian Society of Cinematographers ADFC	2
Danish Association of Cinematographers DFF	2
Finnish Society of Cinematographers FSC	2
French Society of Cinematographers AFC	2
Greek Society of Cinematographers GSC	2
Irish Society of Cinematographers ISC	2
Mexican Society of Cinematographers AMC	2
Romanian Society of Cinematographers RSC	2
Swedish Society of Cinematographers FSF	2
Austrian Association of Cinematographers AAC	1
Brazilian Society of Cinematographers ABC	1
British Academy of Film and Television Arts BAFTA	1
Chilean Society of Cinematographers ACC	1
Croatian Cinematographers Society HFS	1
Estonian Society of Cinematographers ESC	1
Hungarian Society of Cinematographers HSC	1
Indian Society of Cinematographers ISC	1
Italian Society of Cinematographers AIC	1
Japanese Society of Cinematographers JSC	1
Portuguese Society of Cinematographers AIP	1
Russian Guild of Cinematographers RGC	1
Serbian Society of Cinematographers, SAS	1
Slovene Association of Cinematographers ZFS	1
Spanish Society of Cinematographers AEC	1
Swiss Cinematographers Society SCS	1

Question 1.2.1: In none of the above, but in the following professional association:

(35 answers)

Instead of the cinematographers associations some participants are members of the following organisations: ACTV, American Association of University Professors, Association of Camera Operators (ACO), British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), Berufsverband der professionellen Filmschaffenden der Schweiz (SSFV), British Guild of Television Camera Professionals (GTC), Commission Supérieure Technique (CST), Deutsche Filmakademie, Documenta A.C., Fernseh- und Kinotechnische Gesellschaft (FKTG), GBCT, GraFTII, Higher Education Academy, IATSE, NSC, Polish Filmmakers Association, Society of Motion Picture Engineers (SMPTE), Western Indian Cinematographers Association (WICA).

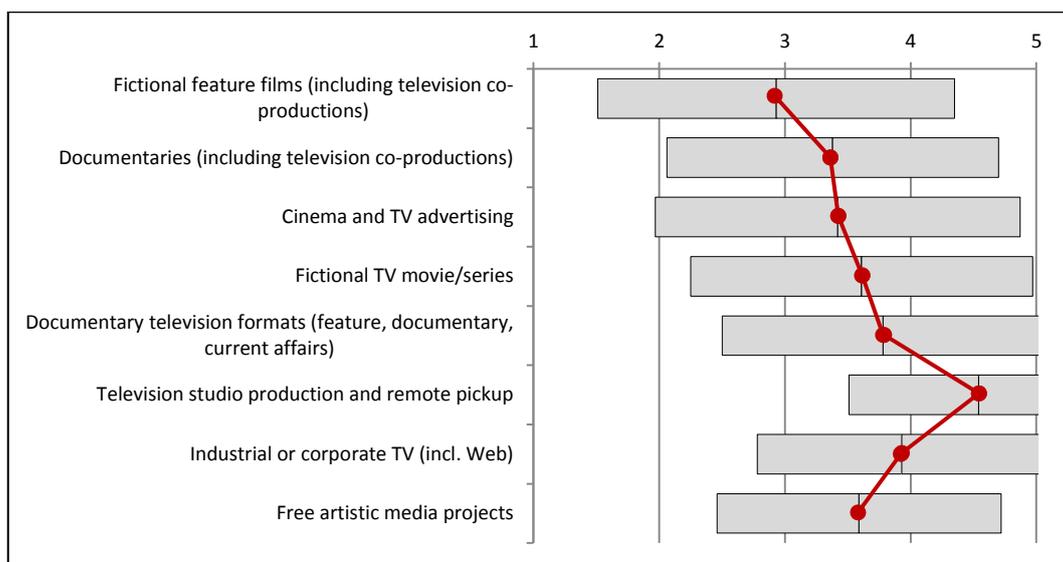
For an index of the societies please refer to the appendix.

Question 1.3: What were your main fields of activity as a cinematographer in the production years 2015/2016/2017?

Rating question

121 answers

The productions should have been shot in the years 2015/2016/2017, regardless of their finalization or their release.



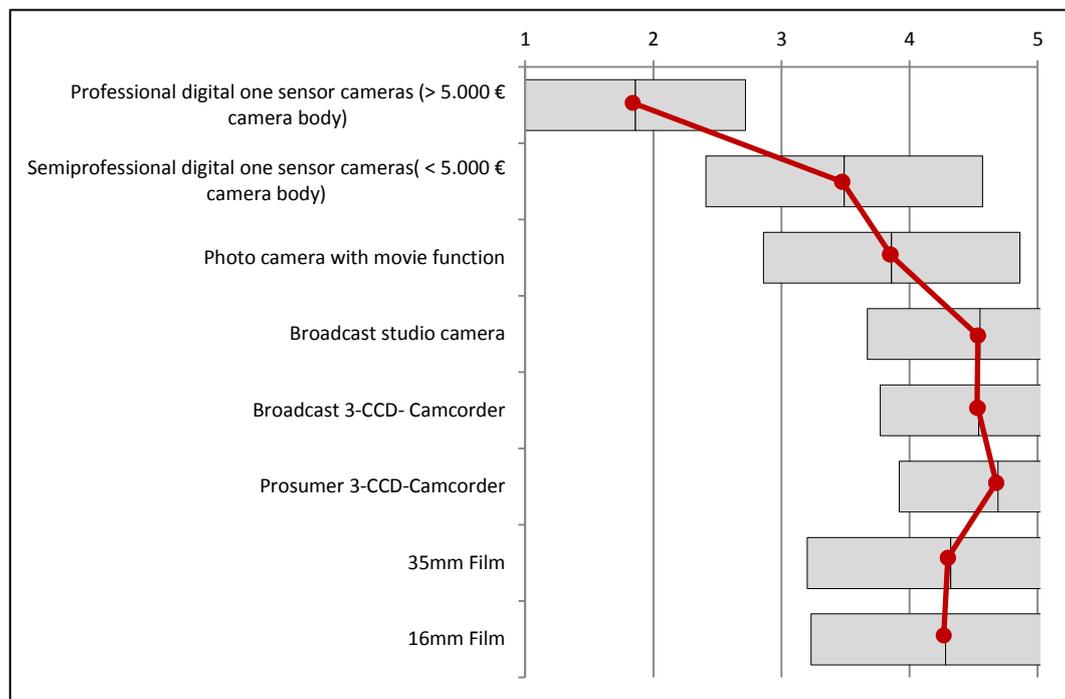
1: very much, 2: a lot, 3: medium, 4: little, 5: not at all

In the interpretation of the bar graphs it has to be taken into account that the medium lines of the grey bars represent the arithmetic average. Additionally the average values are marked with red dots that are interconnected by red lines. The widths of the grey bars represent the standard deviation. So, wide grey bars mean a big heterogeneity of the opinions, narrow grey bars mean a big consensus. The grey bars may be cut off at the maximum or the minimum value. Please note also differences in the scale and direction of the graphs.

Question 1.4: Which camera types did you use how often in your films during the last three years?

Rating question

122 answers



1: exclusively, 2: very often, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: never

Conclusions Module 1: Your working conditions as a cinematographer

125 participants from 40 states worldwide give a representative cross-section. Very positively many participants come from other continents than Europe, so a broad national distribution was reached. As a general result it turned out, that there were only very few national specialities.

70 % of the participants are a member of a national cinematographers' society. Another 28 % are a member of another professional society. This means a very high degree of professional organisation. But it has to be taken into account that the survey was announced and forwarded primarily via IMAGO and the national cinematographers' societies, so their members may be slightly over-represented. Nevertheless it may be assumed that cinematography teachers are as organised in professional societies as cinematographers. Hence, the cinematographers' societies also have a responsibility for the teaching of cinematography.

The main fields of activity as cinematographers are dominated by fictional and documentary feature films including commercials. Television productions, especially multi-camera, were fewer than average. This might again be caused by the way of announcing and forwarding it to the potential participants. On the other side this could represent reality in many film schools and universities that see feature film as the "supreme discipline" for cinematography. Clearly, this has a huge impact on teaching cinematography: It is seen primarily as an artistic topic, accompanied by craftsmanship, technological aspects, scientific aspects and others.

Question 1.4 about the camera types used for the productions has been criticized by a few participants as "too technical". But it had been asked in module 1 and module 3 on purpose to have an indicator about the kind of the productions and whether the technical circumstances are the same in teaching. Here is an interesting cross-reference, especially for the use of 16mm and 35mm film stock. Most of the productions are shot with digital single sensor film cameras. (It will be no surprise, that it is nearly the same in teaching.) All other kinds of cameras are of lower importance, particularly TV broadcast and studio cameras. As a surprise many cinematographers still shoot on photo chemical film, especially 35mm. (As will be seen in question 3.2 for teaching this amount is even higher.) Another significant cross-reference: In our survey "The Cinematographer and the Lens for Film and Television" 2014 the participating cinematographers stated to use digital single sensor film cameras for 68 % of their productions, 20 % broadcast three sensor cameras – and 7 % 35mm resp. 5 % 16mm film. ²

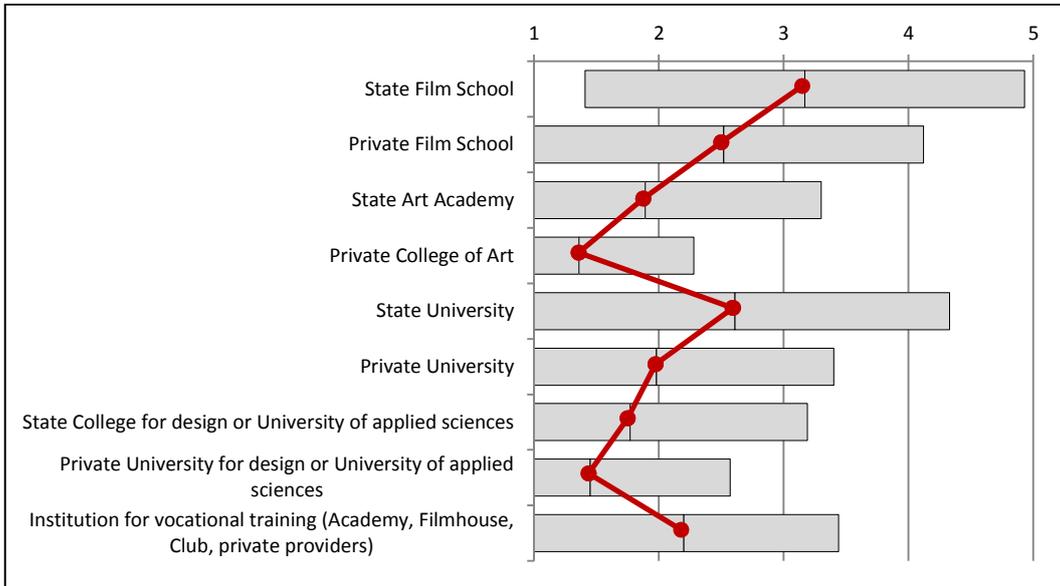
² Slansky, Peter C.; Richthofer, Katrin: *The Cinematographer and the Lens for Film and Television. An Inquiry*, Center for Advanced Studies of Film Technology of the University of Television and Film Munich, 2014

Module 2: Teaching Conditions

Question 2.1: At which types of universities / institutions do you teach how many days per year in average?

Rating question

122 answers

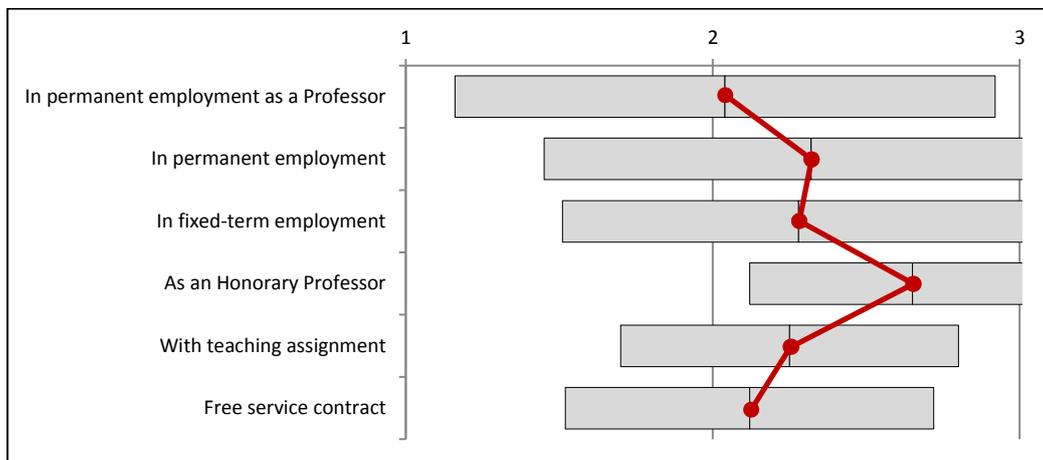


1: none, 2: 1 to 10 days per year, 3: 11 to 20 days per year, 4: 21 to 40 days per year, 5: > 40 days per year

Question 2.2: In which service or contractual relationship do you teach?

Rating question

122 answers



1: full time, 2: partly, 3: not at all

Conclusions Module 2: Teaching Conditions

Many participants teach at different schools or other institutions in parallel in different time scales. The variety is expressed by the broad grey bars in the graph. It can be no surprise that the most of the teaching of cinematography is done in states film schools. This is the standard model for academic film education in Europe. But they are not followed by the – rarer – Private Film Schools but by State Universities. The reason is that in many countries outside Europe there are no film schools, the standard model for academic film education being film departments at Universities. Cinematography is also taught by institutions for vocational film and television training. The last group is academies for fine arts or performing arts.

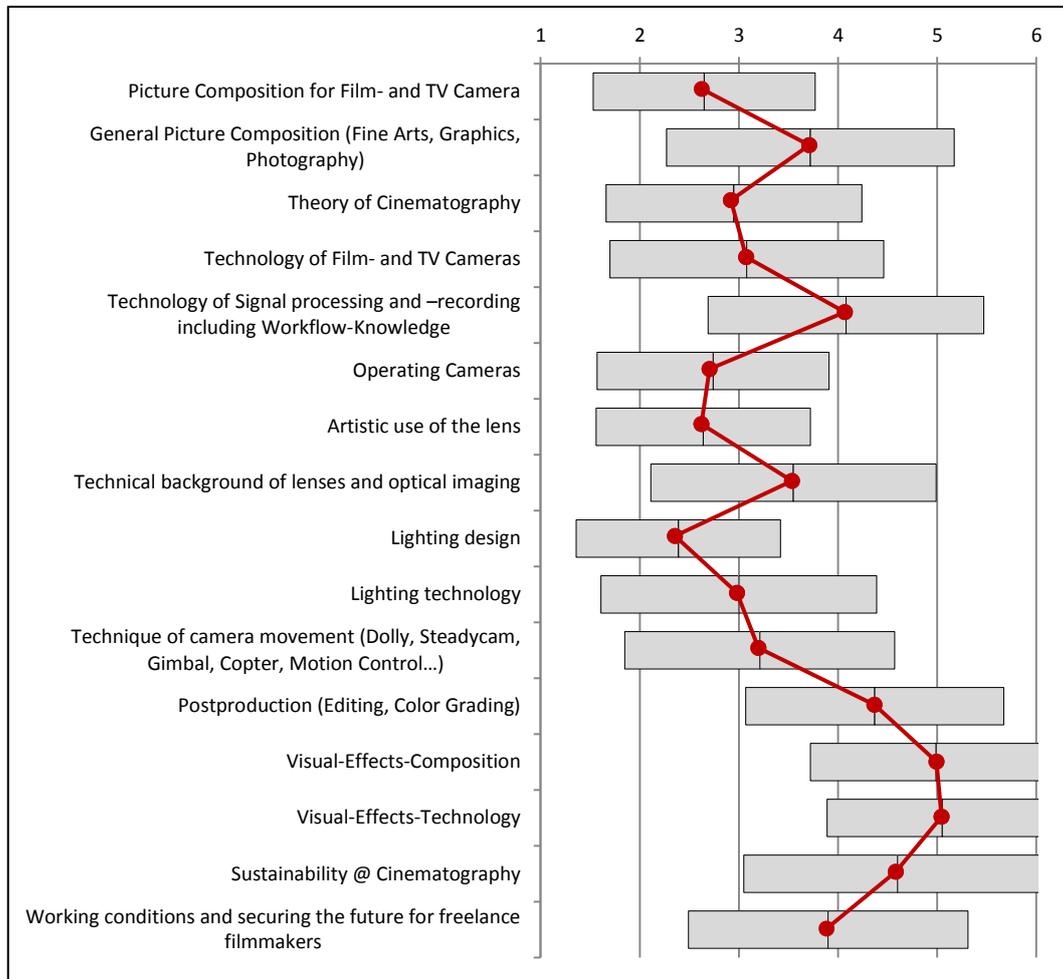
The contractual relationships show a huge variety. Many participants teach as a professor and/or in a freelance contract. Many teach at different institutions in different contractual relationships. Many of the contracts are temporary. Honorary professorships are quite seldom.

Module 3: Teaching Subjects

Question 3.1: Which topics do you teach?

Rating question

113 answers

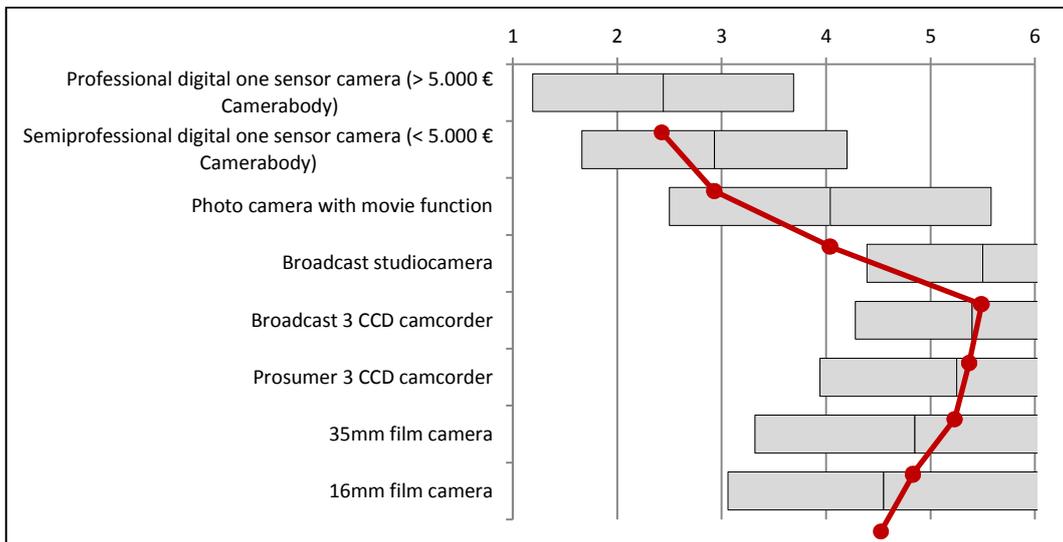


1: exclusively, 2: mostly, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: rarely, 6: not at all

Question 3.2: Which types of cameras did you use how often in your classes during the years 2015/2016/2017?

Rating question

113 answers

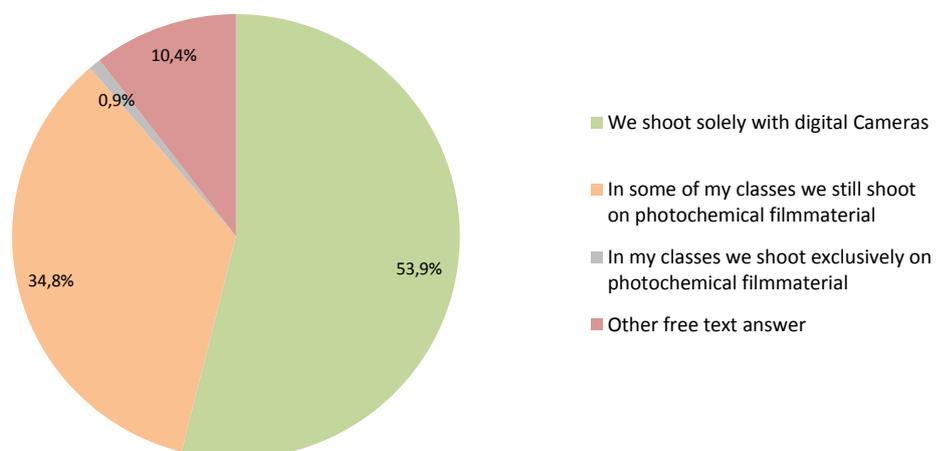


1: exclusively, 2: mostly, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: rarely, 6: not at all

Question 3.3: Which importance does the use of photochemical film have in your classes today?

Single answer question with free text answer possible

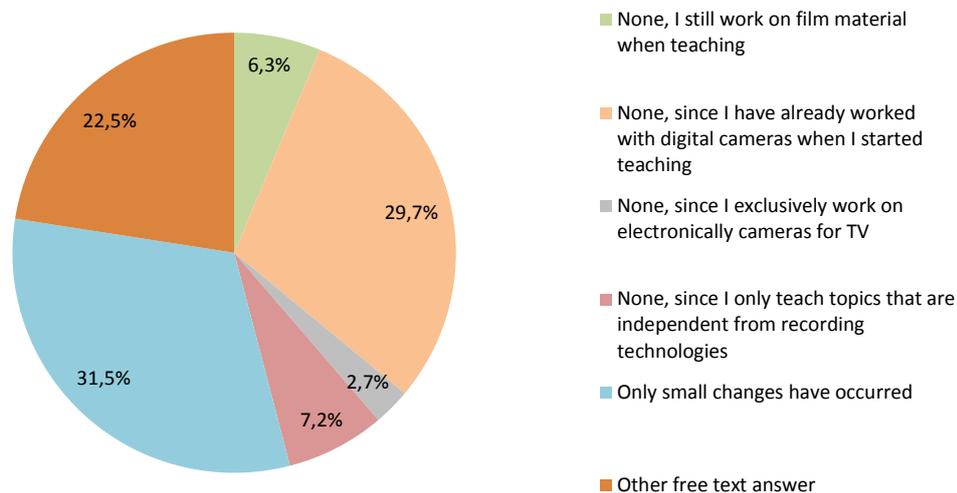
115 answers



10,4 % of 115 answers were free text answers describing models of the use of film stock for teaching as well as a complete substitution of film by digital cameras. Including these free text answers, 57 % of the participants only use digital cameras in their teaching. On the other hand 41 % use partly digital cameras and partly film stock in their teaching. This is a remarkably high amount! One teacher only uses film stock for his teaching (a cinematographer from the US with nearly 30 years of teaching experience).

Question 3.4: Which changes did your teaching undergo due to the digitalization of the image taking, respectively the omission of photochemical film?

Single answer question with free text answer possible
111 answers



A selection of the other free text answers:

“Using the best from film technology and the best coming from digital”

“Inside the 18 years of my teaching I permanently had to integrate all the technological innovations in image acquisition into my teaching.” (From German)

“There is much more shooting now, so the time for analysis becomes shorter. The discussions are more broad than deep. High quantity is often mistaken by the students for quality.” (From German)

“It has become difficult to explain the students the need for planning of the image/of a scene in advance, as well as the need for light measurement and light control.” (From German)

“Due to the lack of film labs there are longer waiting times for the development or scan; this has negative consequences for the procedures of a seminar.” (From German)

“The decisions for composition have become much more direct and obliging by internet search. The choice of the equipment has become more important. (For example there are more lenses and camera types available.) More control is gained over the result by post-production, but also preproduction. Negative: There is only little sense of light measurement on set – with the consequence that the students cannot reproduce their lighting situations. Also, the education of second camera assistants has been canceled.” (From German)

“Wide question. It is essential to get the students to work according their pre-vision not only by that what they see from the monitor. This is vital for example for pre-production and planning. Workflow and working habits have changed a lot, too. All main productions seem to focus more and more to the pre- and post-production since the time for principal shooting in so limited nowadays. It is also important to get the students familiar with the new formats but it is even more important to give them the knowledge of the tradition of camera technique and lighting as well as composition and content related story telling.”

“None of these answers really fit the question. The change to the industry is fundamental and that has a significant impact on teaching. It's not as simple as none, small or big.”

“My predecessor wanted to quit using film material to switch completely to digital, but I decided to upgrade the film (16 & 35mm) part.”

“Trying to tone down the Technicality of digital shooting. Trying to concentrate on making storytelling images seems to harder with this generation of cinematographers.”

“In post-production the big change happened more than a decade earlier than in shooting, so this is still relevant for understanding basic principles and for restoration, but in the main focus anymore.”

“I had to focus the contents towards areas of interest linked to the electronic image and the construction of the image in that domain. I left aside the mechanical and concentrated on finding analogies between the chemical and the digital. On the other hand, the audience (students) come with a greater knowledge of the digital foundations, so the contents of the courses must be refocused to reinforce competencies related to creativity and workflow in the digital domain. With regard to lighting techniques, this has remained very similar.”

Question 3.5: How do you judge the use of classical photochemical film for education in the future?

Open free text question

95 answers

58 of 95 participants in this question give a statement for the use of film in teaching cinematography, also in the future. 28 participants stated that they now only use digital cameras, some of them regretting the fact, some not. 9 participants gave differentiated answers.

A selection:

“In a wide consensus of the docents of our film school the work with photochemical film in the first year – 16mm black & white reversal – has recent advantages that are also respected by the students:

- *Film stock is ‘valuable’: The students see it as a special gift by their school.*
- *For the students it is awe-inspiring to work with cameras that are much older than themselves.*
- *The fact that with this very camera ‘The Big XY’ already has shot his or her first little rehearsal scenes leads to a high identification of the students with our school.*
- *Having to learn how to load the magazine and to operate the light meter raises concentration and precision.*
- *Because film stock is short, the students rehearse more before they shoot and the whole team is more concentrated when the button is pushed.*
- *The time for the film development is – strangely – seen as a retarding effect in the drama to even increase the thrill of anticipation for ‘the big moment’ in the cinema.*
- *The optical projection of their first scenes in the cinema is seen as a precious group experience of the students of that specific year.*
- *Reversal film means: Every student knows that ‘what you see is what you have done’.*
- *Black & white is seen as ,cool’.*

According to this we will keep shooting on 16mm b&w reversal as long as possible. But only in the first year.” (From German)

“It is important so the students will maintain their relationship with handicraft and concrete materials. The planning and maintaining the vision is important benefit too.”

“Essential to have some contact with working on celluloid for as long as possible. Even for students who will never go on to work on film in the future they learn many key cinematography concepts that relate to both film and digital in a much shorter time on film than when teaching with digital, eg understanding of ASA, shutter, exposure, colour temperature, depth of field, crop factor etc. etc.”

“Film is an excellent medium for teaching students discipline. Discipline in terms of preparation and shooting ratios, and discipline in terms of lighting and exposure. The main restriction in continuing to use film in practical exercises is the cost.”

“I still think there is a need to teach the use of film. Film is able to capture texture in a way that digital cannot and so there is an important aesthetic difference. Working with film cameras is useful in developing discipline, both in terms of work practice and team dynamics. It is also useful in demanding that students are focussed on what they need to tell their stories. Many fine artists still use film and some features are still produced on film, it is important that our students are prepared for this when they leave. There is still a romance attached to using film both in terms of shooting and the end result. Our students love it and would be demanding it if it were not offered.”

“Reducing to small niche. It is not about what we know, what we prefer or what is better it is just the way things are moving.”

“I think understanding the exposure and latitude is a good way to teach by using film. I also ask the students to make lighting without monitor for digital craft. When they have to trust on own eyes they have to think more and that develops skills for faster working. But basically I don't need film material in my teaching anymore.”

“Still hugely relevant, but harder to roll out to a large cohort - in terms of them using film as their primary form of acquisition. Partnerships and support from photochemical labs is important in order for us to continue to support film.”

“Photochemical Material has a very slow processing for teaching. Digital cinematography let us make exercises in class while watching what we are doing in real time, in a calibrated monitor. I believe that if I teach a good technical way to understand cinematography, my students get enough resources even if we are working in digital, for knowing what they should test before shooting film.”

“It is an excellent teaching tool, the best available. I haven't seen any other tool to intensify the learning speed of the whole student crew than photochemical film. The discipline, depth of preproduction, analysis and self-preparation that comes with film stock for all the creative team members is incomparable to digital.”

“It would be great to continue the use of film in cinematography in higher education to have students better understand where technologies and disciplines of working with them have evolved over the years, but the overheads related to processing and shooting

film makes this understandably difficult for institutions to continue; especially with the ever improving digital formats available on the professional/prosumer markets allowing for more attractive material not easily achieved with earlier digital formats (eg: small sensor cameras pre-Red/Alexa) that couldn't achieve such 'filmic' looks. "

"I will try to convince my institution to re-establish the use of photochemical film to our teaching schedule. The visibility of the process and the physical experience helps as a basic knowledge to understand digital logic later on." (From German)

"I wish we still had a chance to shoot some 16mm film at school. When shooting film, students are more careful. They think better to composition and lighting. They learn faster how to use and read the light exposure meter and spot meter."

"For the productions cinema in Italy the up-to-dateness is digital. The way of the image is divided by 90 % TV and 10 % cinema. Didactically the photographic work procedures are similar to the photochemical and adapt in the digital world."

"Photochemical material remains the best foundation technology for teaching cinematography. Period."

„Our lectures which use photochemical film are taken with great enthusiasm by our students. They love to develop the (black & white) film themselves. The boost of knowledge about exposure of film stock as well as digital sensors is enormous. Especially in the context of a university the joy of free experimenting is valuable and worthy of preservation." (From German)

"A great discipline but too expensive for anything but occasional use."

"As long as film stock and development is available and affordable the students should learn 16mm and 35mm. It is a very good school for precision, accuracy and organization, from the conception via the shooting, especially for the exposure." (From German)

"It is student/faculty specific. For most of the students deep knowledge does not appear necessary. However, understanding both negative and positive film characteristic curves facilitates the understanding of the post production process, especially color grading. It also gives them better understanding of color filters."

"Museum service" (From German)

"After teaching cinematography for last thirty years I am observing growing, and accelerating, problems during last five years since digital acquisition were fully integrated in our school's curriculum. Cinematography students are unable to read light, and thus correctly expose the images, they can't light for the atmosphere since they bare using monitors instead, have no respect for perfect framing and composition, pulling the focus and problems with pre-visualization. In other words digital acquisition is not sufficient for learning all cinematography skills and respect for individual frame. The approach ,shoot

first and think later' leads to a complete loss of conceptual thinking. Since film acquisition was completely abolished in our core curriculum these issues come up and have to be addressed in advanced cinematography classes. All this is reducing cinematography education to just ,mechanical image acquisition' level. How to fix this is a million \$ question that has to be seriously addressed. But because higher education is all about money (enrollment and retention numbers) administration has no intention to acknowledge problem."

"A basic foundation" (From German)

"Very important!" (From German)

"Essential - without teaching film it is much harder to ,undo' the laziness of the Instant Image generation. Film is a wonderful ,back to basics' tool."

"Definitely but also sadly, out of time"

"Very important due to the rigor and discipline required for film cinematography and the misconception that in digital cinematography you can correct any and all of your errors during the shoot."

"Photochemical material is the best for education. There's what I call ,DOP's-Touch' base on what DOP want to get and how that situation will be look like. Everything must be perfect and more self-discipline in what you are making for. This days DOP will give the best on the shoot. In post-production, they will make it much better and the result is what you see is what you will get."

"Film acquisition is still the basic learning curve. When you understand exposure on film you can easily apply it to the digital world with more rigor and expertise."

"no future"

"There are a lot of correspondences between film teaching and the digital we use today. Anyway, the bases of the sensitivity, grain, gamma curve, contrast, color get similarity in digital applications. The optics performances are similar and the different possibilities of grading are huge regard on the film techniques..."

"An Endangered Species! ... But Digital will never replace FILM If WE Can Help IT! FILM is NOT DEAD! We Must Teach the use and Creative Possibilities of Film and it's Great Simplicity!"

"I see it as a helping tool in the education of future cinematographers (cinema) to get them in contact with the mechanic-chemical film, but the playful experiment is enough. The analog/digital workflow is not a teaching topic anymore." (From German)

“due to limited budgets and class time analog production is not welcome by administration”

“Impossible in my country (Greece), due to both budgetary conditions and the absence of film labs. Of consideration of course the limited availability of film stocks as well.”

“The images of digital sensors are mathematically sterile: Pixels side by side. Every exposed film image is different due to the diversity of the grain distribution. So, every film image has a unique vividness.” (From German)

“We have to bemoan the vanishing of the film labs. By that it has become much more difficult to show the effects of light exposure to the students (especially with the time for the chemical process). As a result, the students rely too much on the display image or histogram. But that does not help them to get a method to reproduce their lighting. But to achieve reproducibility in all aspects of composition should be a key in teaching. Right now I am not very optimistic about the future use of film material in teaching. Too many arguments are raised against it: cost, time, postproduction... Finally the students bring a huge amount of various experiences with digital hard and software with them.” (From German)

“I find classical photochemical material for education in the future as first choice of training material, at least it must be there to begin with. After 70 % of education/training (time-wise), digital media may be introduced.”

“useful as a historical reference (like we learn Latin!)”

“I consider film as very important but I cannot see an economical chance for the use of it in the framework of my teaching in a public broadcasting station.” (From German)

“I warn the students that they may never use film in their careers; yet they all want to learn about the use of film.”

“unfortunately, now in stereo 3D technologies you can use only digital format”

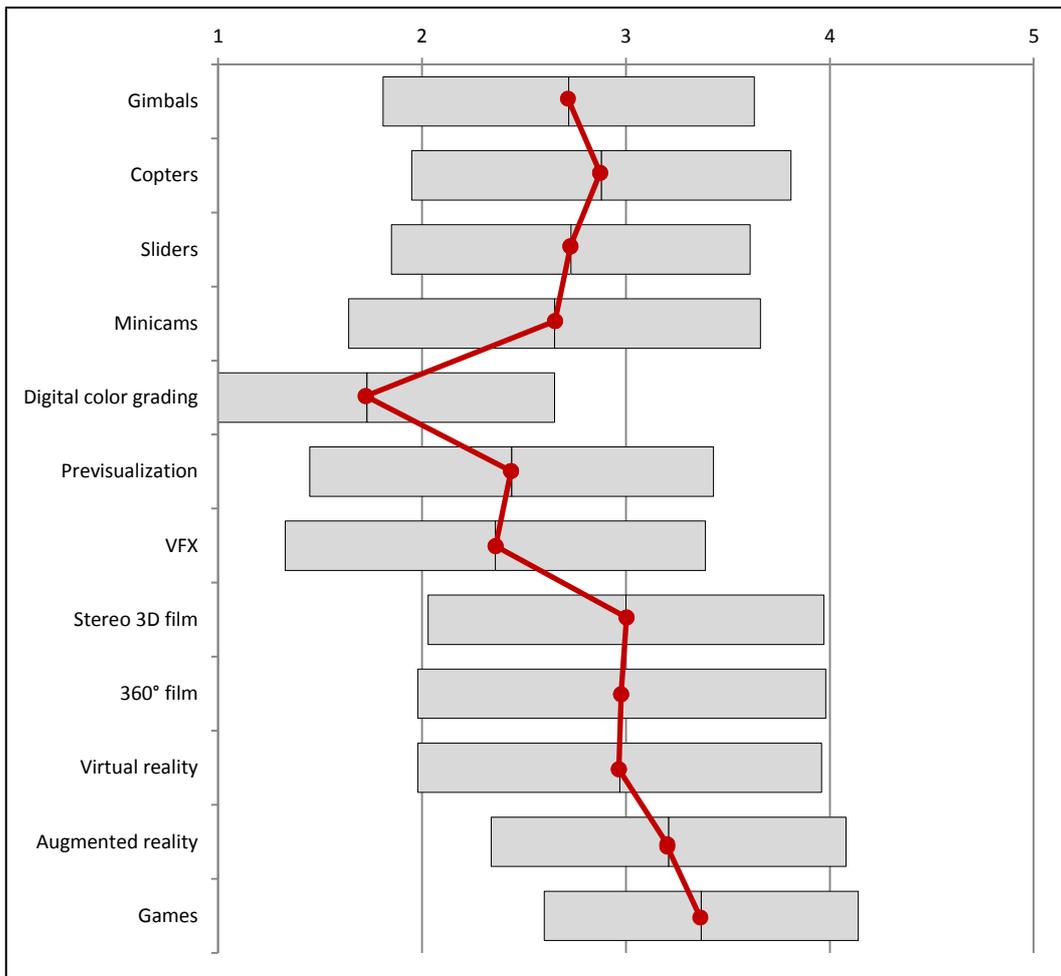
“If available, students must be given the opportunity in film negative. It will train them to pre-visualize the lighting design in their minds eye. Unfortunately in India, all labs have closed and film negative also not readily available.”

“Sadly, I fear it is harder and harder to justify in an educational context. The college I teach at continues to provide instruction in 16mm and 35 mm cameras for capture, but it is harder to access processing labs in this country. All post-production and finishing is digital.”

Question 3.6: Which changes occurred in your teaching due to the following new technologies?

Rating question

110 answers

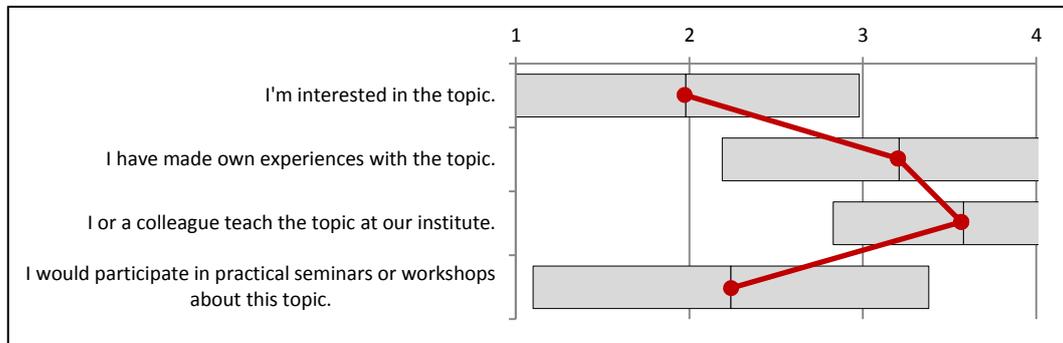


1: big, 2: medium, 3: small, 4: none, 5: does not concern my teaching

Question 3.7: Topic "Ecological Sustainability @ Cinematography":

Rating question

113 answers



1: definitely, 2: medium, 3: a little, 4: not at all

Question 3.8: The following initiatives, film technologies, research projects, institutions, experts or contacts should be taken into account when approaching the topic "Sustainability@Cinematography":

Open free text question

32 free text answers

The following topics and technologies were mentioned:

- Green Shooting
- Energy consumption
- Generators
- LED lighting
- Working with available light
- Transport
- Weight
- Catering
- Production waste
- Paperless production
- Social and fair working conditions
- The effect of the culture of film on the human race
- ALBERT – Sustainability in Film Production
- The University of the West of England.

Conclusions Module 3: Teaching Subjects

Most important for this question module was question 3.1: “Which topics do you teach?” The narrow bars in the chart showed a wide consensus about the commonly taught topics. Interestingly, first priority is not pictorial design but lighting. From the answers the following priorities of teaching subjects can be deduced:

Teaching subjects with high priority:

1. Lighting design
2. Artistic use of the lens
3. Picture composition for film- and TV-cameras
4. Operating cameras
5. Theory of the cinematography

Teaching subjects with medium priority:

6. Lighting technology
7. Technology of film- and TV-cameras
8. Technique of camera movement
9. Technical background of lenses and optical imaging
10. General Picture Composition (fine arts, graphics, photography)
11. Working conditions and securing the future for freelance filmmakers

Teaching subjects with low priority:

12. Technology of signal processing and –recording including workflow-knowledge
13. Postproduction (editing, colour grading)
14. Sustainability @ cinematography
15. Visual Effects Composition
16. Visual Effects technology
17. Others

Please note, that this list is not complete as shown in question 3.6.

Question 3.2 “Which camera types did you use how often in your classes...?” has been criticized by some participants as “too technical”. But the answers are quite enlightening because they match very precisely with the answer profile of question 1.4 “Which camera types did you use how often in your films during the last three years?” Hence, the cinematographers use nearly the same camera types for their productions as for their lectures. There are two differences. Firstly, the amount of semi-professional and consumer single-sensor-cameras is higher in teaching than in the productions. Secondly, the use of photochemical film is significantly higher in teaching than in the productions.

The fundamental technological change from photochemical film to digital signal processing, from shooting via postproduction to projection, has been carried out by all

teachers of cinematography old enough to witness both “periods” with only very rare exceptions. The amount of photochemical film in today’s teaching of cinematography is astonishing though: More than 40 % of the participants still use film stock in their lectures. Many of the others deeply regret that film or lab services are not available any more in their countries or cities. The reasons for the use of photochemical film in teaching can be read from the answers to question 3.5: 61 % of the participants make a clear statement for the future use of film in their teaching. 30 % declared that they use only digital cameras now, some of them regret it, some not. 9 % gave differing answers. Many of the supporters of film declared, that the use of photochemical film – by reasons of technique and price educates the students to precision and accuracy. Very important for the teaching process is that, due to the lab process, the result is not available immediately. So, all the decisions on the set as positioning and movement of the camera, framing, focus, lighting, exposure, filtering and so on have to be made step by step. The “shortcoming” of the unavailability of the image on set turns out as an advantage for teaching. Another advantage of the use of film is the reduction and the concentration of the students on the optical basics of picture composition without getting lost in the possibilities and gadgets of digital camera menus. On the other side, all cinematographers acknowledge the use of digital cameras as today’s reality. Only for teaching cinematography they see exceptions. As one participant wrote: “[Film is] useful as a historical reference (like we learn Latin!)”.

Teaching cinematography for television is a subject of minor priority. This result can be seen from the minor use of broadcast cameras and semi-professional cameras with beam splitter. Just like in question 1.4, it has to be taken into account that TV-cinematographers have not been targeted by this inquiry in the same amount as cinematographers for cinema, because IMAGO – as well as the national cinematographers’ societies – have a larger membership of cinema- than of television-DOPs. This preference is transferred to the teaching institutions to a considerable proportion. The film departments of Universities and the film schools mostly see themselves as art’s schools and the majority of the cinematography teachers put the artistic approach on first priority. But as can be seen from the answers to question 3.1, the majority of the cinematography teachers also teach non-artistic subjects: technology, craftsmanship, image theory and so on.

Very interesting are the answers to question 3.6: From all new image technologies, color grading has had the strongest influence on teaching cinematography. VFX and previsualizing are following. New technologies for the movement of the camera like mini cams, sliders, gimbals and copters have medium influence. Only small influence comes from “disruptive” image technologies like 360°-film, virtual reality, augmented reality and – taking the last place – games.

There are different possible conclusions. It seems that teaching cinematography (mainly for cinema films) is a remarkably stable – or “conservative” – field of activity. Technology

has changed and is still changing, but the basics of framing, camera movement, lighting etc. are still the same. The huge impact of digital color grading is no contradiction to this. The cinematographers had to react to the challenge and had to integrate color grading into their work as well as into their teaching to maintain their authorship of the image. On the other side, the “general convergence of the media”, as it was very often proposed since years, did not take place – at least not in the creative work and the teaching of the participants of this inquiry.

Sustainable cinematography represents a special topic area (questions 3.7 and 3.8). On the one hand most of the cinematographers are aware of its significance. On the other hand in general they have little experience with it. Hence, advanced training – for the job as well as for teaching – is stated to be important. For the future we can expect a growing demand. We can also expect that the aspects of sustainability encroach upon other fields of cinematography, especially lighting, being responsible for a huge amount of energy consumption on a film set. And lighting has top priority for cinematographers as a teaching subject. So, we can expect new changes in cinematography as well as in teaching cinematography for the near future.

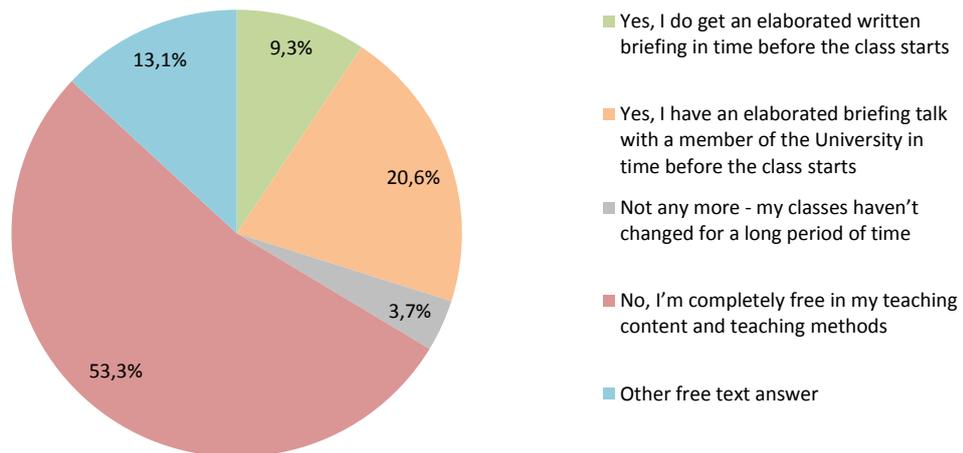
Most of the cinematographers who took part in this survey teach a bouquet of different subjects related to cinematography, largely with a combination of theory and practice. Only few cinematographers confine themselves to only one aspect of cinematography, most of them combine different artistic subjects that are essential for the creation of moving images. Teaching subjects with a low orientation for application have a low priority. The basics of lighting technology, camera technology and lens technology are taught as subsidiary subjects. The interconnection with transcendent subjects as 360°-film, virtual reality, augmented reality and games is small: “Cinematography” still means the rectangular upright standing moving image, on a canvas or a display.

Module 4: Teaching Methods

Question 4.1: Do you teach on the basis of content-methodical agreements with the University/ the lecture organizer?

Single answer question with free text answer possible

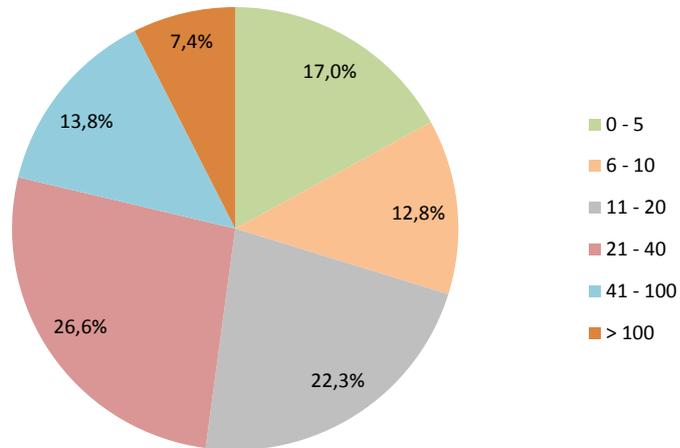
107 answers



Question 4.2: How long do you work on the preparation and follow-up of your classes?

Open question; declaration in working days per year: "Additionally to my teaching I spent ... days per year for preparatory work and follow-up"

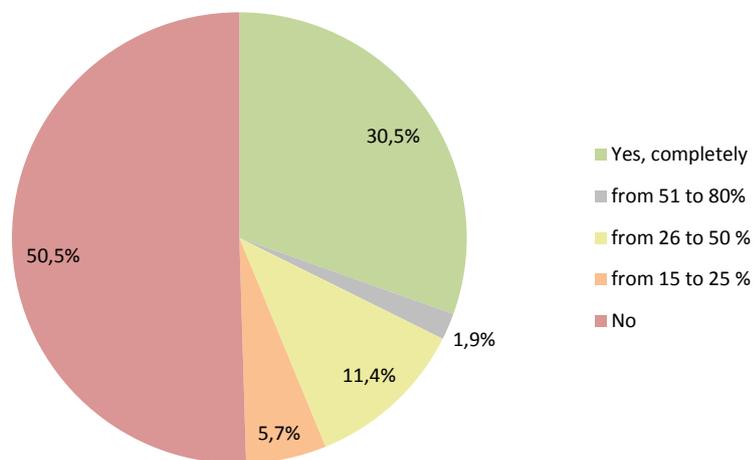
95 answers



Question 4.3: Do you get paid for preparation and follow-up time?

Single answer question

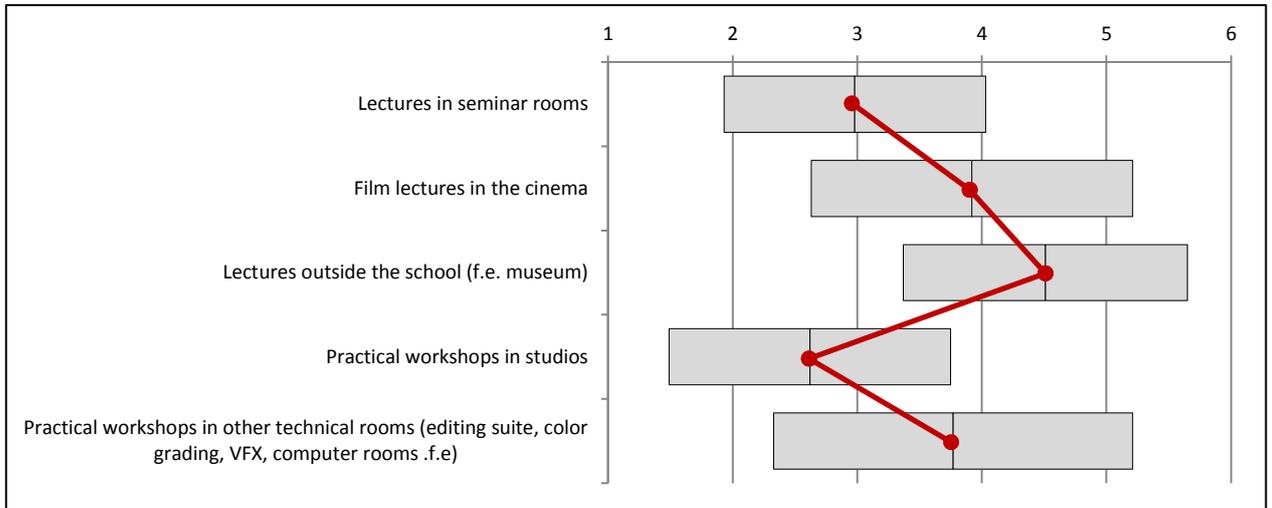
105 answers



Question 4.4: In which group constellations do you teach?

Rating question

106 answers

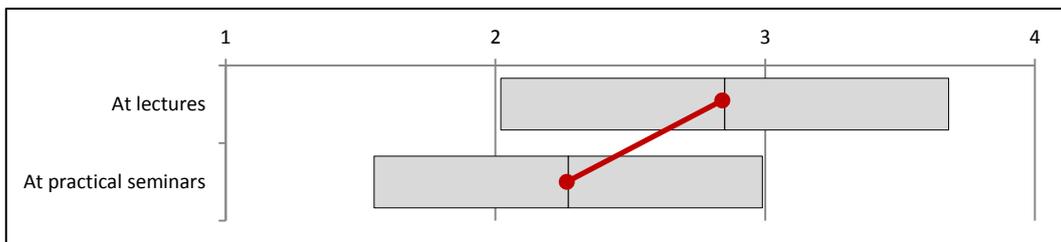


1: exclusively, 2: mostly, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: rarely, 6: never

Question 4.5: How big are your groups of students/lecture participants?

Rating question

106 answers



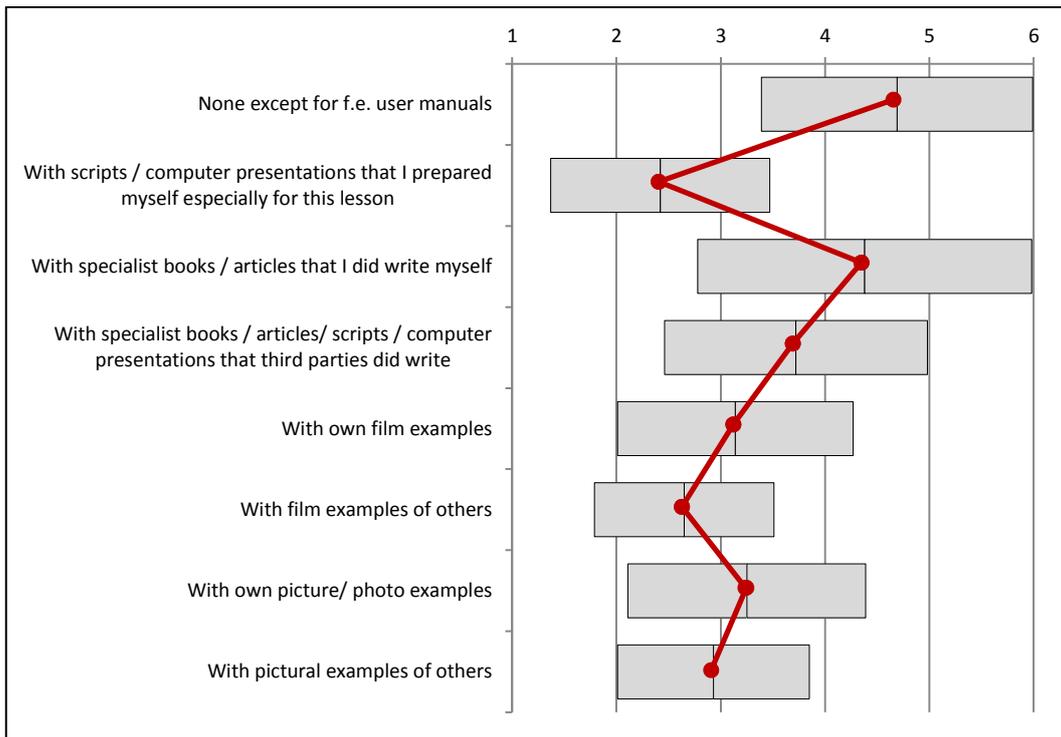
1: < 6, 2: 7 – 12, 3: 13 – 25, 4: > 25 participants

Question 4.6: With which written/ pictorial teaching materials do you teach?

Rating question

105 answers

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

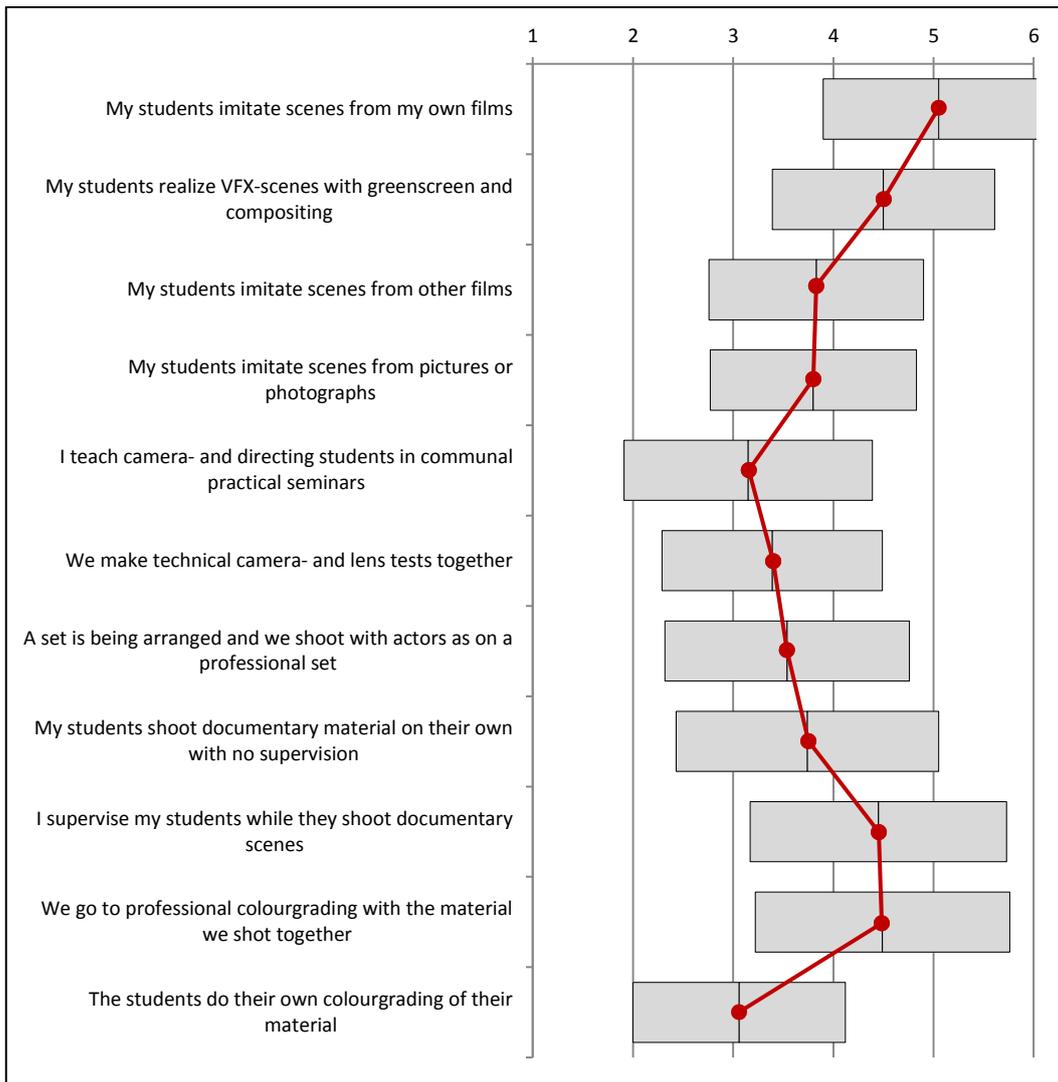


1: exclusively, 2: mostly, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: rarely, 6: never

Question 4.7: How do you teach your practical classes?

Rating question

106 answers

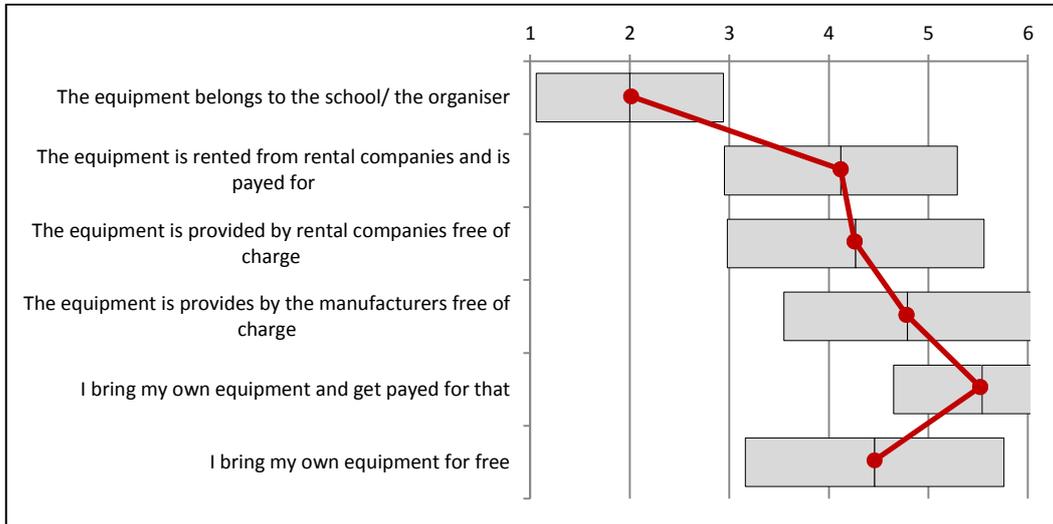


1: exclusively, 2: mostly, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: rarely, 6: never

Question 4.8: Where does the equipment for your seminars originate from?

Rating question

106 answers

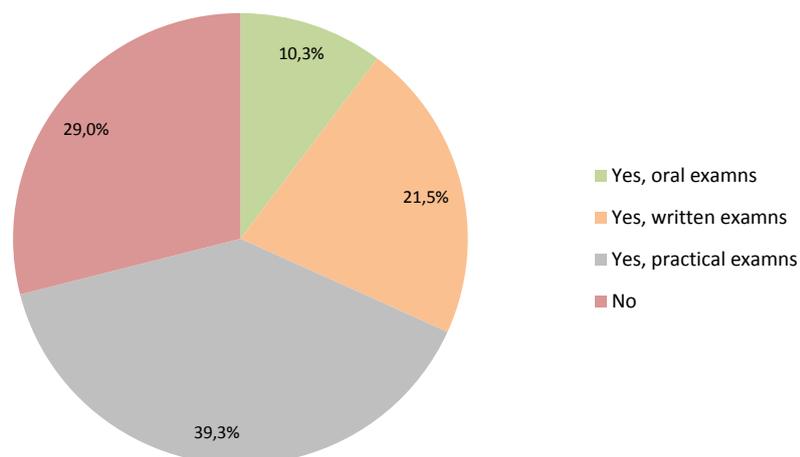


1: exclusively, 2: mostly, 3: often, 4: sometimes, 5: rarely, 6: never

Question 4.9: Are there exams for your lessons?

Single answer question

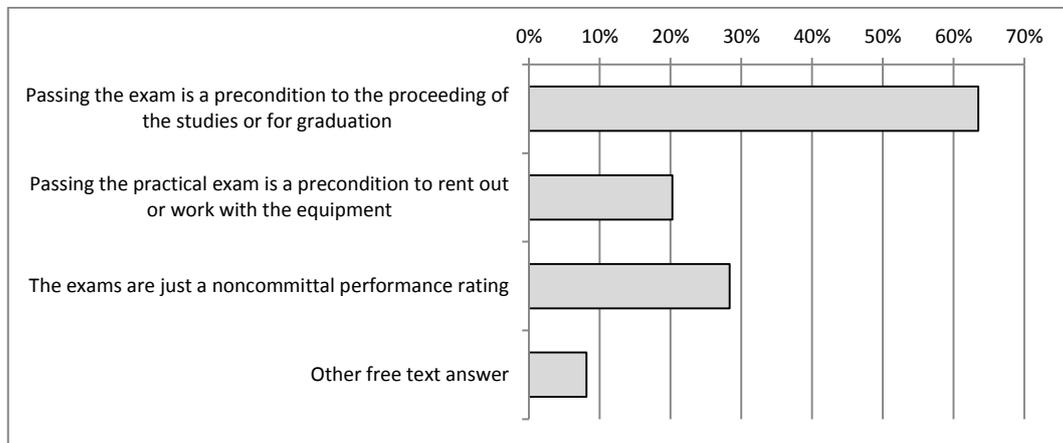
107 answers



Question 4.10: Which significance do those exams have?

Single answer question with free text answer possible

74 answers



Conclusions Module 4: Teaching Methods

To question 4.1, many participants answered that they decided on their teaching subjects and methods in collaboration with representatives or other teachers of the school. In one third of the cases a firm commitment is made before the beginning of the lecture or workshops between the teacher and the teaching institution. Beyond that, there is a wide variety of formal and informal arrangements about the teaching subjects and methods including stable long term engagements.

In the answers to question 4.2, the participants stated the amount of time they spend on preparation and follow-up of their lectures in working days per year. The numbers are remarkably high. Half of all participants work between 11 and 40 days per year for the preparation and the follow-up of their lectures. Cinematographers with a fixed professorship work an average 50 days per year for the preparation and the follow-up, some of them up to 200 days per year. These numbers can be explained with the extraordinary need of technical equipment – cameras, lenses, lighting, dolly, grip – and for technically high equipped rooms – studios, cinemas, editing or color grading suites – for teaching cinematography. The high amount of technisation of teaching demands a similar amount of organization. This can be delegated only to some extent. It is fair to say that from all academic disciplines cinematography has one of the highest amounts of preparatory and following activities directly linked to teaching.

This result has to be seen in the context of question 4.3: Only in 30 % of all cases the time for preparatory work and follow-up is paid completely. In more than half of the cases the teachers are not paid for this work at all. Full payment is mostly given to

teachers with a fixed contract or professorship, no payment is common for visiting lecturers or teachers with a free contract. In many countries, State Universities and film schools are bound to strict legal regulations that allow payment for effective teaching time only and prohibit payment for preparation and follow-up. This creates a huge gap of (in-) justice for many teachers of cinematography.

It cannot come as a surprise that practical workshops in a studio are the most commonplace form of teaching cinematography (question 4.4). Interestingly, lectures in a seminar room outweigh film screenings in a cinema or screening room. This may have one reason in the lower availability of cinemas or screening rooms compared to seminar rooms. But it can also be taken as a sign that cinematography is not completely dominated by practical training and that theoretical studies come into their own.

The answers to question 4.4 show a wide consensus between the participants. Bigger variations come for question 4.5 about the sizes of the learning group. This is not a big surprise because smaller groups of students result in higher costs for the teaching institution. The participants stated average group sizes of 12 to 25 students for practical workshops at Universities. For film schools, a wide majority stated 6 to 12 students per group. There were no significant national variations for this. We can conclude that a group size between 6 and 12 Students has been established as an optimum for practical workshops and lectures with technical equipment. The schools and the teachers have to deal with the high amount of technisation and organization and the small group sizes to achieve a high quality of teaching, even shareholder value driven institutions.

The answers to question 4.6 show that there is a wide consensus about the teaching materials for cinematography: Nearly all participants prepare their own scripts and presentations. This is also one reason for the huge amount of preparatory work. Only a minority of the participants uses self-written articles for journals or books in their teaching – as a kind of a double outcome of the preparatory work. Widely in use is professional literature. Interestingly, the majority of the teachers do not use image examples from their own films or photography but mostly from other cinematographers/photographers.

In question 4.7 “How do you teach your practical classes?” the answers could only be picked from a long list of very concrete examples on purpose. The result shows medium standard deviations. Most cinematography teachers let their students recreate scenes from films, photographs or paintings. The examples from third-party work outweigh the examples from one’s own work. Interestingly, photos and paintings are nearly as often in use as a template as film scenes. A wide consensus is about teaching cinematography students together with directing students. Also very common are technical camera and lens tests. Teaching cinematography for fictional films outweigh teaching for documentary films. When the students are shooting for documentary most of the time they are not supervised by the teachers. Very often the color grading is done by the

students. As in question 3.6 this is expressed by a small standard deviation: Again we can see that color grading is very important for teaching cinematography.

The equipment for teaching is mostly property of the school as the answers to questions 4.8 show. As the teachers have stated in their answers to question 3.2, nearly the same cameras are used for teaching as for production. This means that the schools have to spend a lot of money on their equipment pools to keep them up to date. Less common is that the equipment for teaching is rented or is given by companies for free. Sometimes even the cinematography teachers bring their own equipment with them, mostly for free. This is another evidence for the high intrinsic motivation of the cinematographers (who participated in this survey) for teaching.

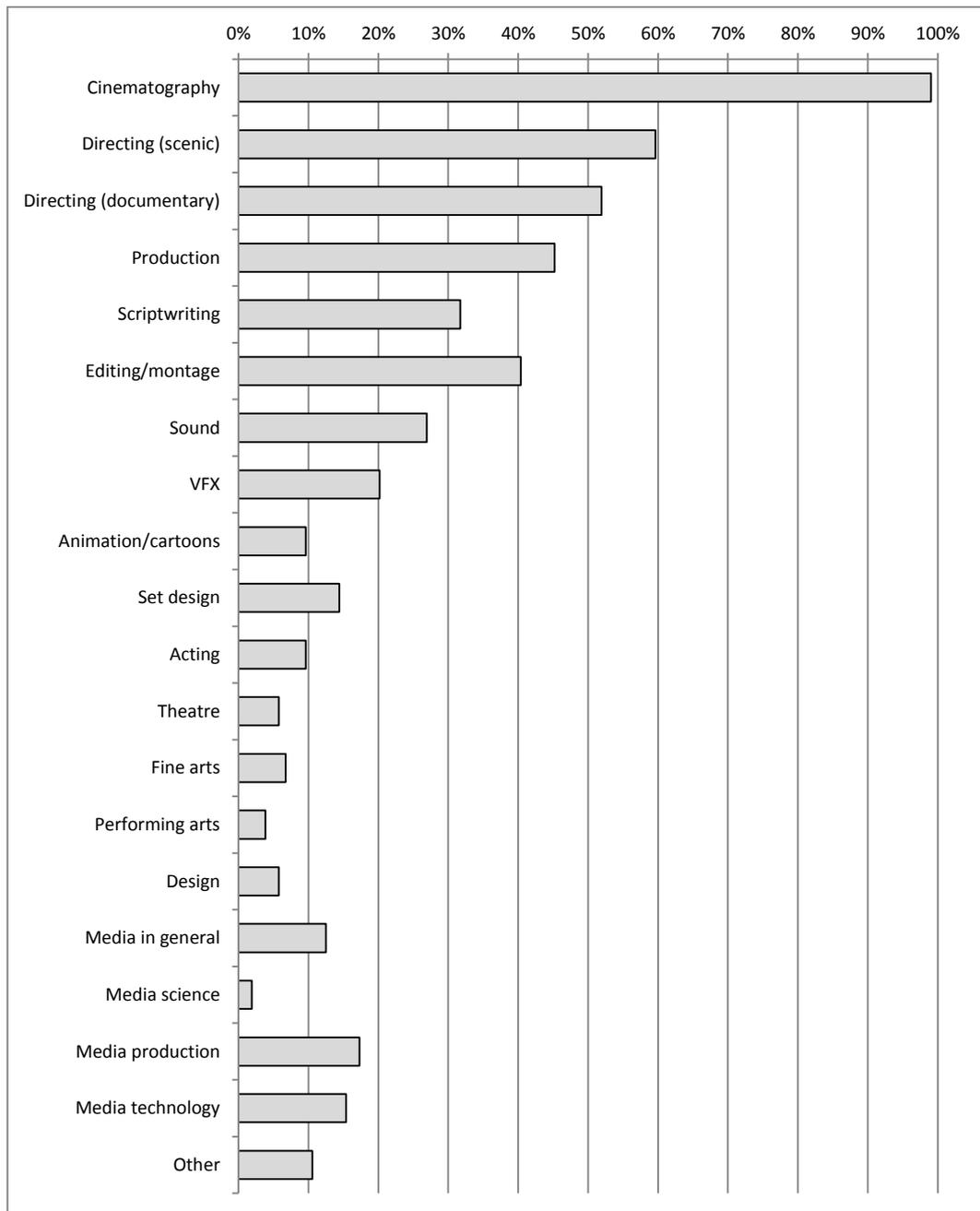
70 % of all participants also conduct exams, with a majority of practical ones. In two-thirds of these cases the exams are obligatory, only in a fourth part they are tentative. In a fifth part only after passing the practical exam the students are allowed to use the respective equipment. In light of the fact that cinematography is mainly seen as an artistic teaching issue, the exam procedures seem to be quite strict. In the following question module we will see that cinematographers educate not only cinematography students but also students from many other disciplines. According to this, cinematography turns out to be a kind of “hard” topic inside film studies. This is expected to be even more the case when technical aspects have a wider scope in teaching cinematography.

Module 5: Students

Question 5.1: What subjects do the participants of your courses study?

Multi answer question

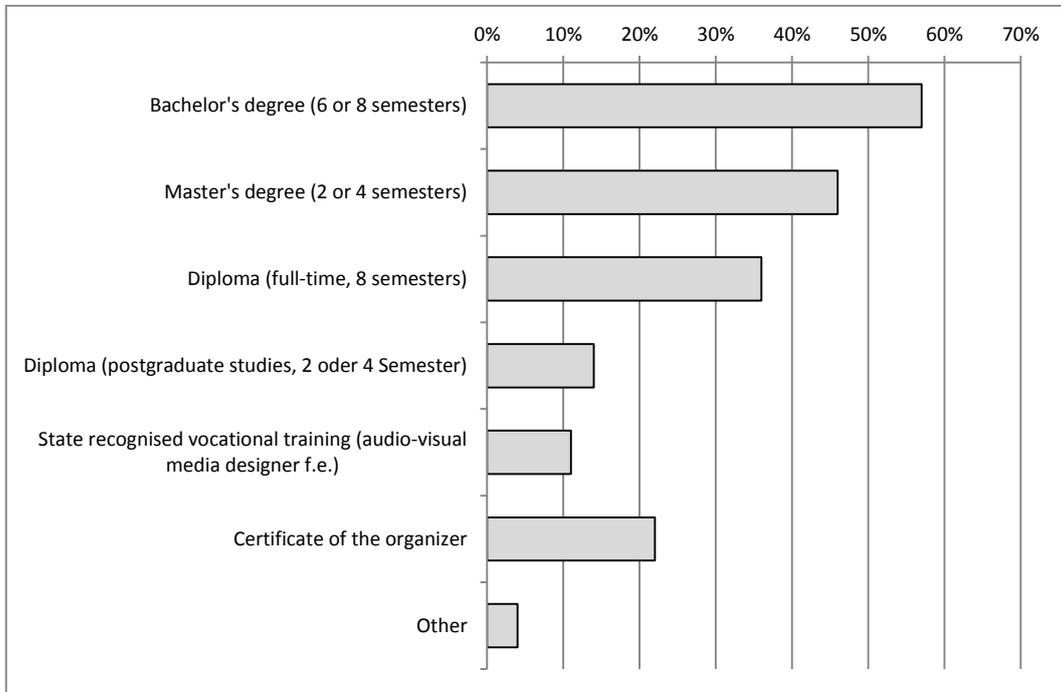
104 answers



Question 5.2: What is the academic framework of your lecturers?

Multi answer question

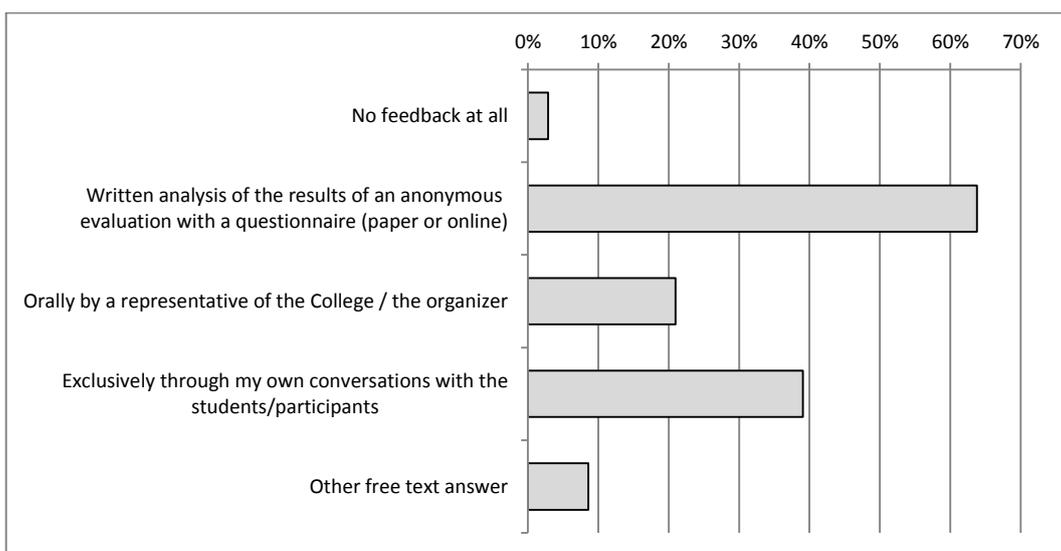
100 answers



Question 5.3: How do you get a feedback for your lectures?

Multi answer question with free text answer possible

105 answers



Conclusions Module 5: Students

The answers to question 5.1 reveal that cinematography is a central subject for many – if not for all – film studies. In more than 50 % of all cases, cinematographers educate directing students as well, in more than 33 % of all cases production students, editing students and script writing students, too. For many more film disciplines, cinematography is a fundamental element to study. So, teaching cinematography means a high responsibility for the teacher not only for his or her own profession, but for all aspects of film and television education. This has to be taken into account in question module 6: In most cases cinematographers are called to teaching because of their creative work. By this they serve as a kind of “anchor”, a professional counterweight, opposed to potential tendencies of theorization and academization of film studies.

According to the answers to question 5.2, the most common degrees for cinematography are bachelor (57 %) and master (46 %). (Please note that the percentage numbers don't add up to 100 because many teachers teach at more than one institution.) But the amount of full time diploma degrees (36 %) and postgraduate diploma degree (14 %) is remarkably high. And the majority of the diploma degrees were stated by participants from Europe. This is quite surprising because the Bologna-process from classic diplomas to the bachelor/master system had first political priority in Europe. But cross-examination with question 2.1 reveals that many film schools in Europe have successfully escaped from the Bologna-process. Even 19 years after its beginning they have obviously good reason to stand firm: Fulltime studies with a diploma degree in the end seem to have remarkable advantages compared to a two-step system.

Apart from an academic framework, cinematographers are also teaching as postgraduate trainers (21 %) or vocational educators (12 %). So, they not only have to interact with students, but also with professionals or trainees with differences not only in previous knowledge, but also in learning style and motivation. Hence, the cinematographers have to develop – respectively they have developed – special teaching skills.

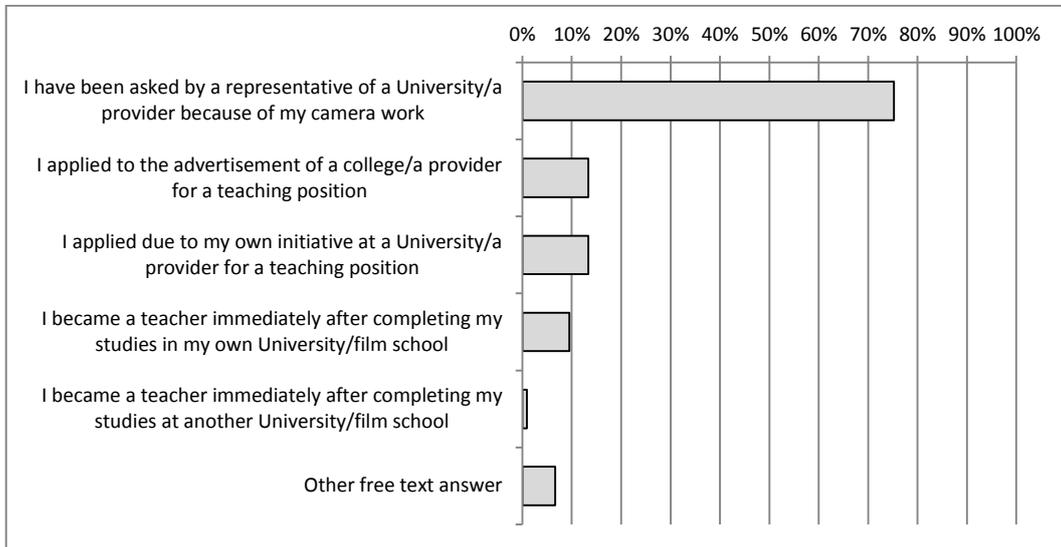
In 67 % of the cases, the teachers receive a documented feedback to their lectures by the teaching institution, in another 21 % an oral one. So, today a formal evaluation procedure seems to be a permanent feature of teaching cinematography. But on the other hand there are 39 % of the participants who stated that they had to “collect” their feedback directly from their students. (Again: the numbers don't add up to 100 %.) In this question neither national nor institutional differences could be found.

Module 6: Personal Relation to Teaching

Question 6.1: How did you start your teaching?

Multi answer question with free text answer possible

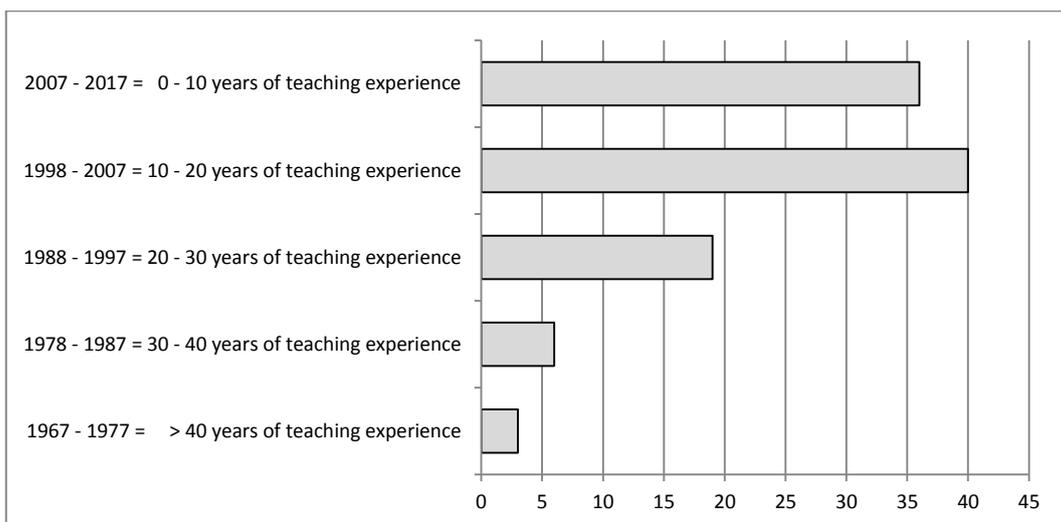
105 answers



Question 6.2: When did you give your first lecture?

Open question for the number of years in teaching

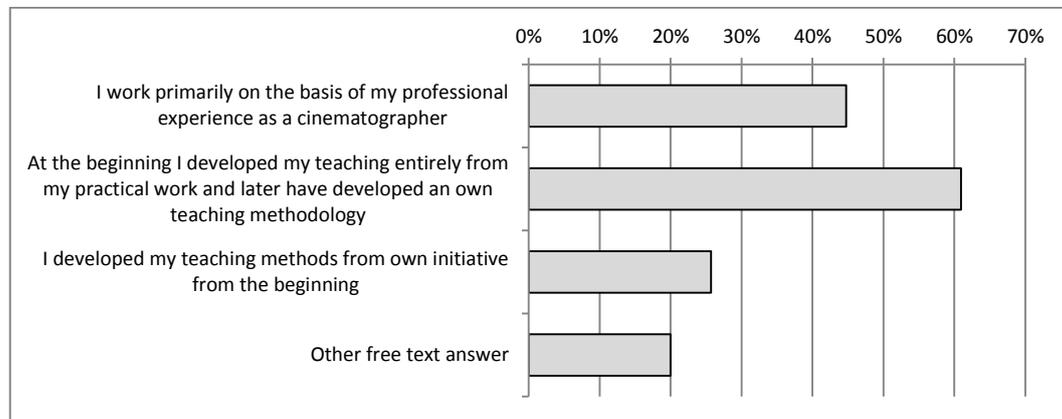
104 answers



Question 6.3: How did you develop your teaching methods?

Multi answer question with free text answer possible

105 answers



In 17 out of 21 of the free text answers the participants stated that they had academic degree or a certificate in pedagogics.

Conclusions Module 6: Personal Relation to Teaching

The questions of module 6 were designed to target the individual biographies of the participants and the interconnection between their creative work and their teaching. A wide majority of 75 % answered to question 6.1 “How did you start your teaching?” “I have been asked by a representative of a University/a provider because of my camera work.” This is a central result of this survey: In a specific moment in time, a cinematographer is “called” to teaching. The initial point for the call is his or her creative work up to that moment in time. The call can come (or end) as a “calling” for a professorship.

From the answers to question 6.2 the individual teaching experience was calculated and put into categories. The result was a three-thirds distribution: One third of the participants had a teaching experience of up to 10 years, another third of more than 10 to 20 years and the last third a teaching experience of more than 20 years. The authors of this survey want to congratulate two participants for their teaching experience of 50 years, one from Belgium and one from the US: Congratulations! And all the best further on!

As a surprise, in many questions of this survey there were no significant systematical differences in the answers between these groups. This means on the one hand that also the “long-term” cinematography teachers have adopted to the fundamental shift from analog to digital technology – in their creative work as well as in their teaching. On the other hand, cinematography also seems to deal with „eternal questions“ that have to be answered anew in each era. A participant put it like this: “*Technology took an enormous leap forward in the last 30 years but cinematography in the principle is still the same.*”

More than 60 % of the participants answered question 6.3 “How did you develop your teaching methods?” with “At the beginning I developed my teaching entirely from my practical work and later have developed an own teaching methodology.” A quarter stated that they had developed their own teaching method right from the beginning. In free text answers, 16 % of the participants wrote that they had finished a pedagogical degree or pedagogical courses. This has to be remembered when coming to question 7.5: “If you could start again today: What would you do differently with your entry into teaching?” Many participants wrote that they wished they would have had more didactic knowledge, for example via a pedagogical degree or training.

Altogether the answers to question module 6 reveal a pattern how cinematographers are called to teaching and how they develop their teaching. This shall be deepened and individualized in the follow question module, as a point of culmination of this survey. But we must not forget that this survey is only about those cinematographers who are still teaching, not about those who quitted after a short or a longer time – for whatever reasons.

Module 7: Tell us Your Story!

49 participants of 88 choose the option to give a nominal statement to the questions of this module.

Question 7.1: How was your very first course?

Open free text question

77 answers

22 out of 77 participants in this question – this is 29 % – declared that they had been quite nervous and stressed in the beginning. Another 20 participants – 26 % – stated that they believe that they made serious methodic mistakes in their first lecture. These two groups together are 42 out of 77 – this is 55 %. 7 participants – this is 9 % – stated that they made their first lecture without special incidences. Only 6 participants – 8 % – declared that they could not remember their first lecture. 19 of the participants – this is 25 % – explained that their first lecture went well.

Here is a selection from the first group: 22 out of 77 participants in this question – this is 29 % – declared that they had been quite nervous and stressed in the beginning.

“I was very nervous, not able to talk in front of the students.”

Peter Zeitlinger, ASC/BVK, Professor for Image, Light and Space at the University of Television and Film Munich HFF, Germany

“The transition from standing behind the camera to a position of giving a frontal lecture was tough. It took me some time to adjust myself to that new situation.”

Yoav Kosh, ACT, Beit Berl College, Faculty of Arts, Film Department, Israel

“Exciting! since you learn so much from alumni (teaching)”

Rene Gaston, AMC, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

“Very exciting! I was nervous like on my first feature but after a few minutes everything was fluid...”

Bruno Philip, CSC, Université de Montréal, Canada

“My first teaching course was at UCLA Extension in front of 18 students. I was pretty scared :-). But...it turned out great! It was a very good experience and I have been also teaching (besides working on commercials, ENG, feature films and corporate video, editing and color grading).”

Ruurd M. Fenenga, NSC

“Daunting”

Michael Hammon, BVK, Professor at the Film-University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“Thrilling. I love to talk about my loves.”

Danny Nowak, CSC, Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada

“It was a ‘film camera’ course for 1-year-old students. It was a very strange experience, especially because of the need to learn to communicate in a clear and didactic way my knowledge and experiences. The biggest challenge today, is when I teach to college students, who require a double job to keep their attention.”

Jorge González, ACC, Universidad del Desarrollo / Universidad de Chile

“Everyone thought it was very good but I was very dissatisfied.”

Donald Bryant, AMC, CCC, CUEC, SAEI Institute and others, México

Anonymous answers from this group:

“It was a workshop on lighting with about 40 participants at Orvieto Fotografia: thrilling, because those guys were photographers very curious about cinematography so they submerged me with questions for a whole afternoon. Not ready yet for a so huge amount of pressure, but it went well.”

“Stressful, like passing an exam myself”

“Appreciated by the students but not very good. It helps if you have a reputation as a cinematographer and the students know your work. Then it grows from there, year to year expanding and getting better.”

"Of course I was very insecure. Stepping from behind the camera to the front was quite a big step. I knew that I had still a long way to go, the knowledge of cinematography is only half the job. The first lessons were very exhausting, me talking and giving information hoping that they wouldn't ask a question that I didn't know... But also very inspiring, the students were very motivating and eager to learn."

"Very difficult"

"Nervous and worrying students can't understand me."

"Exciting: Do I have enough content to fill the time? Do I talk about things the students are interested in...?" (From German)

"I was very excited to find myself in that position. I had big difficulties to talk. After few minutes, things went smoother and nice."

"Incentive and exciting."

"Chaotic"

"Pathetic!"

"Daunting! 40+ people staring at me."

"It was hard for me, as I've never been teacher before."

Here is a selection from the second group: 20 participants – 26 % – stated that in their mind they made serious methodic mistakes in their first lecture.

"I was engaged for a two weeks seminar about mise en scene and I was very well prepared – lots of books read and recent passages underlined... After two hours I had displayed everything I had prepared, but there were still 10 days of the lecture lying before me. So it became clear to me, that I had to build my teaching on my personal experiences." (From German)

Pierre Mennel, SCS, Professor for Cinematography at the z hdk Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland

"I had prepared too much material and at the end of the two hours lecture I had only covered 1/10 of what I had prepared."

Petru Maier, DFF, European Film College, Ebeltoft, Denmark

“I was very strict.”

Manuel Caballero, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

“Perhaps I was a little negative in my first ever lecture. I explained how difficult it was going to be for my students to find sustainable work in the film and television industries. I have changed my opinion on this over the past 4 years - because many of my students have found good work or have become successful freelancers.”

John Podpadec, GTC, University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK

“I analyzed and discussed the first photos and films of the first year’s students. I showed them some similar works that I had made in the same time in my own studies. By this the students – and I – opened up and we got to know each other much better, our insecurities, fears to fail, dreams for our future and so on. After that I was very exhausted and I was insecure, if it was too much for the beginning. But the students stated that it had been a great start. So, I try to initiate this intensive getting to know each other always in the beginning with the new students.” (From German)

Susanne Schüle, DFA, Professor at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“It was a two days lecture ‚basics of television technology‘ in front of 40 participants in a vocational training. We held the lecture as a team of two, my University friend Detlef Möllering and I. It turned out to be a total overextension of our participants, because we had the ambition to compress a significant part of the content of our studies into these two days. This exceeded the previous knowledge of the participants by far. We gave the lecture 8 hours per day with lunch break and two coffee breaks. Every 90 Min. the other one took over, so we were not getting exhausted – but it would have been better if the participants would have been able to rotate, too... Nevertheless the feedback at the end of the second day was quite positive. But I think it was more because of their respect of our ambition, and less about our teaching method...” (From German)

Peter C. Slansky, FK TG, Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film (HFF) Munich, Germany

“First I stood in front of students, I was confused. I didn't know their knowledge about film making, and their desire. A couple years later, I understood their level of knowledge, but worried how I communicate with them. They strongly have the will to make a movie,

but no technique at all. Also they tried to start from camera or acting, but I know they should start from editing or cutting. It's the other way around. Film making is total collaboration of all partial technique."

Makoto Watanabe, JSC, Professor at the Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences, Tokyo, Japan

"My first course was a little hectic as I attempted to cover too much. Also the students were interested in anecdotal chat which I was happy to engage in but not expecting."

Tim Fleming, ISC

"Students of cinematography with short films in 16mm. I was exhausted."

Alfonso Parra Redondo, AEC, EICTV Film and TV school of Cuba

"Hard to see yourself teaching, but I suppose I talked all the time."

Jouko Seppälä, FSC, Head of Film- and TV-Production Degree Programme at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

Anonymous answers from this group:

"I was under heavy time pressure, because everything took so much more time than I had expected. So, I had to reduce my aspirations to the work with the camera strongly, which was quite difficult for me in the beginning." (From German)

"Awful! I was totally ill prepared and hadn't fully appreciated the complexity of trying to teach something. Knowing a lot about it wasn't enough, knowing it well enough to help someone else understand and thinking it through in enough depth to structure the dissemination of information is a life's work (and I have planned and considered the sharing of knowledge in great depth ever since!)"

"Embarrassing. I said something very dogmatic, like 'Never use a zoom lens!' that the students still remember to this day."

"I was also excited, students were eager to learn, teaching and learning cinematography is fun, I learn too."

"I realized that I was running and no-one could catch me."

"Nerve wracking, and great fun in the end. Felt a bit like a fraud as I learned an awful lot from the students."

"My first course was tough. I was a young professional, with not that much experience in cinematography and no experience in teaching at all. Also, some students were older than me. I started as a tutor practical workshops, and with a lot of work and some good advice by more experienced professors I worked it out."

"Rather unstructured, I think..." (From German)

"Not good. I had far too many film examples for the film impact analysis and I was not prepared for a group that could not deal with it." (From German)

Here is a selection from the third group: 7 participants – this is 9 % – stated that they made their first lecture without special incidences.

"First course was the basics for video shooting. I was asked to have few lessons to exchange students."

Tommi Moilanen, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland

"I was teaching lighting principles in stills photographers. I was amazed by the fact that, despite being pros, they were lacking some elementary knowledge."

Argyris Theos, GSC, Me / HDSEminars, Athens, Greece

"It was the workshop of Professor Vadim Yusov."

Alexandr Melkumov, RGC/SMPTE, The All-Russian state institute of cinematography of S.A. Gerasimov VGIK, Moscow, Russia

"I've started with an interactive teaching Digital Cinematography. By that time the topic wasn't so broad, so the terminology and theory was sparse and mixed."

Alexandru Sterian, RSC, Senior Lecturer PhD at the UNATC I L Caragiale Bucharest, Babes Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, Romania

“My first course was teaching documentary, very focused on the camera work, but always taking in consideration that this is a collaboration with the director. I believe that the cinematographers of documentaries are practically co-directors.”

Gabriel Hernández Tinajero, Documenta A.C., Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México City

“My first year seemed straight forward, I supervised an existing course which relied on regular input from working cinematographers. I would organize, reinforce, supplement and contextualize their teaching. Gradually that changed and I began writing and constructing lectures on my own. We have changed the Cinematography 4 times in the last 7 years. Not so much the content but the structure and entry level of the students.”

Kim Batterham, ACS, Head of Cinematography of the Australian Film Radio and TV School, Sydney, Australia

Here is a selection from the fourth group: 6 participants – 8 % – declared that they could not remember their first lecture.

“My first course was so long ago, that I don't remember the details. As a visual medium of human expression, image making requires art literacy, and practice. Telling a story requires being able to touch people's emotions in order to educate them, and move them. To communicate with people, you must understand and empathize with their cultural frame of reference. This is what I teach in my classes.”

Harry Mathias, SMPTE/AAUP, Professor at the San Jose State University, California, USA

“I hardly remember specifically, however there was a period where I taught at three different institutions that had a totally different level of both expectations and requirements. The only thing that was definitely clear (to me that is), was that I was always at ease with the procedure.”

Dimitris Theodoropoulos, GSC, Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Fine Arts, Cinema Department, Greece

Anonymous answers from this group:

“I honestly don't recall it with great detail. It was pretty OK but nowadays I would consider it seriously lacking.”

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“Honestly I don't recall it. But the early courses were usually through an independent media school where I was hired to teach advanced cinematography.”

“To be honest, I don't remember. It was ok, otherwise I would remember.”

Here is a selection from the fifth group: 19 of the participants – this is 25 % – explained that their first lecture went well.

“Easy and pleasant. It was about the methodology of using film cameras from capture to the lab.”

Tony Costa, AIP, Head of Cinematography Department, Universidade Lusofona, Lisbon, Portugal

“I was filling in for another instructor and presented several articles I'd written for American cinematographer. So the students felt I was the 'Wizard from afar'. It went very well.”

Karl Herrmann, CSC, Capilano University, Vancouver, Canada

“I started doing long Masterclasses at Camerimage in 1998 that developed into "epic" masterclasses of 2-3hrs for ARRI. Every few years I would propose a new Masterclass which would always be supported by Camerimage and by ARRI. Some of the ones that worked very well were:

- 1. Re-building the set of The Grifters and having students come up on stage and re-create the end scene. The class ended by showing the actual scene from the film.*
- 2. Doing a Green Screen "car workshop" where the combined image was projected on a large screen above the set.”*

Oliver Stapleton, BSC, Co-Head of Cinematography of the National Film and Television School (NFTS), Beaconsfield/London, UK

“very good – would not have been appointed for full professorship otherwise.” (From German)

Walter Kindler, AAC, Professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Film Academy, Vienna, Austria

"Loved it. Got the bug for teaching."

David Neal, BAFTA, Lead Senior Technical Instructor Cinematography and Postproduction at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

"Good. Students want to hear what you have to say, they want to hear about your practical experiences. They are very receptive to practicing cinematographers."

Mark Carey, Head of Cinematography of the Northern Film School, Leeds, UK

"Not bad. My biggest worry was about my accent."

Robert Buchar, Professor at the Columbia College Chicago, USA

"Very positive. I was analyzing their work in a group session."

Mick van Rossum, NSC, Head of Cinematography of The National Film Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

"Successful"

Ciaran Tanham, President of the Irish Society of Cinematographers (ISC), Griffith College, Dublin, Ireland

"Good, but compared to today maybe a little bit rigid..." (From German)

Matthias Bolliger, DFA, Hamburg, Germany

"Quite enjoyable, although I probably talked too much."

Brendan Lavelle, ACS, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

"Teaching framing for kids - very simple and uncomplicated."

Kim Høgh Mikkelsen, DFF, Head of Cinematography Department, The National Film-school of Denmark, Copenhagen

Anonymous answers from this group:

“It was fine, I wasn't experienced enough to worry too much and just went with the flow.”

“I had the opportunity to give my first lecture ‚Basics of Photography‘ at the Al Jazeera Media Institute in Doha. Teaching language was English [I am a native German speaker]. I just had two participants. This became a really intensive lecture – and I still have good contact with these two people :-).” (From German)

“It was a general visual media course. About 30 students. I had minimal technical support, but I had very good response in the Q & A period. I think a success.”

“My first course was a camera assistant course, comprising a lecture and a hands-on exercise. I was allowed to shape it myself. It focused mainly on focus pulling and routines. Since it was considered a success, and the students wanted more, we expanded it the next term, and focused a second lecture on lenses; focal length, depth of field. After that we added a third lecture on filters, color and texture. Later, we added a section on camera movement and tempo. This camera assistant course has eventually turned into a cinematography course, and I still use some of the basis for it today. It is still a work in progress.”

Question 7.2: What was your best experience in one of your courses?

Open free text question

73 answers

The answers to this question show a big variety of expressions of the joy of teaching as well as positive feedback from teaching to the individual creative work.

Here is an uncategorized selection:

“When the students find out what they really want.” (From German)

Pierre Mennel, SCS, Professor for Cinematography at the z hdk Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland

“Learning myself too with my students – by conversation and following their work.”

Rauno Ronkainen, FSC, Aalto-University Helsinki Film School, Finland

“More than once, seeing (or hearing) the ‘Aha!’ experience in my students, the moment of realisation when a concept (mostly the exposure latitude or the working of the lenses) becomes understood, becoming the ‘property’ of the student, and by that making us equals in a way - the student understands and can operate with the same concepts as me ... on the way of becoming a cinematographer.”

Petru Maier, DFF, European Film College, Ebeltoft, Denmark

“Every semester, I teach a short narrative film production class, and two cinematography classes. My production class selects (by student vote) one or more student-written projects to film. They edit the scripts, plan the shooting days, cast the actors, and then shoot the projects in four to six ten-hour long days, under my direct supervision. The actual number of shooting days depends on the length and complexity of the script that is selected, but it is always at least four full days plus planning days. My classes teach the methodology and techniques of film production and cinematography, the actual shooting of the project is over and above the curriculum taught during my class time allocation.”

Harry Mathias, SMPTE/AAUP, Professor at the San Jose State University, California, USA

“Getting a joyous and grateful response from a one week workshop focusing on camera-work with improvised acting/directing. All participants gelled into a wonderful, inspirational and critical unit.”

Michael Hammon, BVK, Professor at the Film-University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“There are many excellent experiences in teaching. When students are keen to learn are working hard and showing good progress it is a very rewarding environment.”

Mark Carey, Head of Cinematography of the Northern Film School, Leeds, UK

“In the school of cinema of Cuba EICTV where the cinema is lived with the students and one sees how they learn day by day. One year we shot a short film only with shadows, the final result was fantastic.”

Alfonso Parra Redondo, AEC, EICTV Film and TV school of Cuba

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

"I have very much enjoyed re-introducing Super16mm film back to our film course. I bring in my own Arriflex SR3A camera and lenses and show our students how to load magazines, expose properly and work as a tight team. As a result I have even started to use film again on my own projects (after a gap of 20 years). I look forward to using my collection of S16 lenses on the Alexa Mini."

John Podpadec, GTC, University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK

"Working in real film set with students and actors. Each student (8) had to work in different roles during 4 weeks:

- *Cinematographer*
- *1st camera assistant*
- *2nd camera assistant*
- *Gaffer*
- *Best boy*
- *Director*
- *Assistant director*
- *Sound recordist*

As result of this course we got 8 chronological short films for screening on DCP."

Tommi Moilanen, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland

"1. When I closed the shades and drilled a hole in it. To my surprise the class room became in fact a camera obscura and we saw the exterior traffic moving in color on the ceiling.

2. 3 day - 3D workshop. We shot a stereoscopic western short and finished it! We treated all particular issues of 3D cinematography and turned them into story action."

Peter Zeitlinger, ASC/BVK, Professor for Image, Light and Space at the University of Television and Film Munich HFF, Germany

"Yesterday. We played all the MA students' films at the best commercial cinema in town with DCP files. We had flat, cinemascope, surround etc. The quality was fantastic. The cinema was packed and we had heads of the BBC and indies along with other industry bigwigs. At the end I was thanked by the students with a standing ovation."

David Neal, BAFTA, Lead Senior Technical Instructor Cinematography and Postproduction at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

"Best experience? Experience is always good. What varies is satisfaction or disappointment with students' performance and later their success in the profession."

Robert Buchar, Professor at the Columbia College Chicago, USA

"Getting surprised by my student's results on screen."

Manuel Caballero, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

"Shooting with professional actors."

Tony Costa, AIP, Head of Cinematography Department, Universidade Lusofona, Lisbon, Portugal

"The most beautiful experience in one of my practical seminars was when a female student who had made a very personal and touching film gave her thanks to me: 'Without your support I would not have been able to make this film.'" (From German)

Susanne Schüle, DFA, Professor at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

"I really enjoyed a master class I gave to members of the Hellenic Film Academy. I was speaking about stereoscopic cinema, evangelizing it as a new cinematic language."

Argyris Theos, GSC, Me / HDSEminars, Athens, Greece

"The 'Grifters' experience above was quite seminal because it had never been done before at that time - there were a lot less courses back then and the experience was novel both for me and the people involved."

Currently I find all experience are 'best' - I very much enjoy the process of exchange between myself the young people on the MA course at the NFTS."

Oliver Stapleton, BSC, Co-Head of Cinematography of the National Film and Television School (NFTS), Beaconsfield/London, UK

“The best experience is to see the excitement of students during class.”

Yoav Kosh, ACT, Beit Berl College, Faculty of Arts, Film Department, Israel

“There were many! Briefly:

1993: The spontaneous reaction of a well experienced Swiss documentary filmer, 20 years older than me, after I screened my latest documentary with an unconventional use of the video camera: ‚Nei - 's Meischerwerkch‘ (Swiss German: ‘No – a masterpiece’).

1997: The personal feedback of a student who was born in India at the University of Design (Hochschule für Gestaltung) Karlsruhe with a very sympathetic rolling ‘R’: ‘Yourrrr was the best lecturrre. Because it was so conccrrrete: Herrre is the perrrrson, therrre is the camerrra...’

2005: Spontaneous applause by the students of the second year at the HFF after my demonstration of the colors being produced from white light by a crumpled plastic foil between two polarizing filters.

2012: The alumni’s commentary, just after he had received his diploma degree: ‘Prof. Slansky, you remember that you did send us back outside into the cold!’ ‘???’ ‘Yes, in your Television seminar in the second year. We had just shot the interview scene from the exercise sheet, but after the screening you said, that it was out of focus and that therefore our interview would not be televised. So you sent us back outside to adjust the flange back distance and shoot the interview again. It was pretty cold outside, during December. After that I have never ever been shooting a scene without checking all the technical parameters beforehand!’” (From German)

Peter C. Slansky, FKTG, Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film (HFF) Munich, Germany

“Multiple; the most rewarding is that after four years the students are truly much more advanced.”

Mick van Rossum, NSC, Head of Cinematography of The National Film Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

“Any time I see the students involved and filled with illusion is great.”

Julio Gómez, ACTV, ECAM and EFTI, Spain

"The students asked me to give them more courses."

Donald Bryant, AMC, CCC, CUEC, SAEI Institute and others, México

"In fact it's after my students graduate and they phone me or come back to the university to thank me for all they learned from me."

Bruno Philip, CSC, Université de Montréal, Canada

"In a film making guide book, there are still many articles coming from the theory, but from my experience, students understand immediately as they actually shoot. I set up one girl sit on the chair hit by one strong back light. Then a boy walks close to face her. She is lit by his shirts reflection. We see her face clearly. Students understand what the light source means. Every object could be light sources by reflections. As you know, this idea comes from Jordan Cronenweth's class that I learned from him at AFI in 1984. I was astonished by that, and it still works."

Makoto Watanabe, JSC, Professor at the Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences, Tokyo, Japan

"When a student finally got the concept of 'Previsualisation of the image' then went and achieved it."

Karl Herrmann, CSC, Capilano University, Vancouver, Canada

"The positive response from students and seeing real talent, though raw, allowing that talent recognize itself."

Tim Fleming, ISC

"Students becoming a part of a professional working camera crew"

Ciaran Tanham, President of the Irish Society of Cinematographers (ISC), Griffith College, Dublin, Ireland

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“Students surpassing & excelling in our exercises!”

Rene Gaston, AMC, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

“The practical examples from which I've learned as well.”

Alexandru Sterian, RSC, Senior Lecturer PhD at the UNATC I L Caragiale Bucharest, Babes Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, Romania

“My best experience was teaching undergraduates about camera movement. The class was large about 25 but everyone participated and you could really feel the students grasping the idea and then running with it.”

Kim Batterham, ACS, Head of Cinematography of the Australian Film Radio and TV School, Sydney, Australia

“When there was participation from the people that were enrolled. Also when I ‘recognized’/predicted persons that had a natural approach; finally and maybe the most crucial experience, is certainly the evolution – sometimes spectacular – of certain students.”

Dimitris Theodoropoulos, GSC, Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Fine Arts, Cinema Department, Greece

“It is so nice to look from the woods as someone is beginning the path.”

Jouko Seppälä, FSC, Head of Film- and TV-Production Degree Programme at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

“We had tested at that time new Sony F5. It happened in one of the city studios on big set design left from some TV series. We shot short movie with fully professional equipment. Afterwards we had professional color grading session and DCP screening organized by SAS (Serbian Association of Cinematographers).”

Vladan Pavic, SAS, Professor at the National Film and Theatre School, Faculty of Drama Arts (FDU), Belgrade, Serbia

“When students come after a class saying ‘this is the best class we’ve ever had by far’, ‘thank you, I’ve learned so much more with you in one class than with the other teachers during the whole last year’ (which implies a serious discussion about the competence level of teachers in such a vocational training school).”

Philippe Cordey, SCS/BVK, ERACOM, Lausanne, Switzerland

“When inspiration has consequences...” (From German)

Matthias Bolliger, DFA, Hamburg, Germany

“Teaching for professionals for a few different video companies”

Ruurd M. Fenenga, NSC

“That simplicity in the theme is the way to better understanding and dialogue. Questions is the way to ownership of own way of perception and understanding. Too many facts in to short time give boredom and no understanding. Breaks to reflect.”

Kim Høgh Mikkelsen, DFF, Head of Cinematography Department, The National Film-school of Denmark, Copenhagen

“I have had the best experiences teaching illuminators and cameramen working on television channels. They are a very motivated audience and eager to learn more sophisticated and elaborate techniques of lighting and camera work.”

Jorge González, ACC, Universidad del Desarrollo / Universidad de Chile

“The student said that at the start of the course they wanted to be a producer; at the end of the course they wanted to be a cinematographer!”

Danny Nowak, CSC, Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada

“The involvement of the students and the excitement they shared in experiencing professional equipment.”

Brendan Lavelle, ACS, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

“2016: My students received at the IS3D International Film Festival in Liège (Belgium) Award for the best documentary film ‘Stakkato, Con Moto’.”

Alexandr Melkumov, RGC/SMPTE, The All-Russian state institute of cinematography of S.A. Gerasimov VGIK, Moscow, Russia

“My most satisfying experience is realizing that the students have discovered a new narrative form, but above all, that he understands that he must always have a point of view when applying technical knowledge, and that he must communicate through this.”

Gabriel Hernández Tinajero, Documenta A.C., Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México City

Anonymous answers:

“There is no one single event, there are so many. Sharing a light bulb moment with a student is a gift. Developing a student's passion. Seeing a student grow in confidence. Enjoying how differently a student does something to how I would approach it.”

“It was on a practical workshop. We had to pull off a very complex long shot from underwater, with light effects and many extras involved. Due to timing and budget limitation, the production course could not find a swimming pool with black ceiling, so we had to shoot at night. Also, we didn't have a chance to test the lighting setup on location before the day of shooting. It was not only technically tough for my camera course but potentially dangerous as well. We practiced a lot in studio and went through every step of the lighting and camera setup many times. On the shooting, every single student acted as a real professional and the shot came out just fine. I was very proud of them.”

“Seeing how the methods that I developed myself change the students and speed up their learning process.”

“I remember and learn more”

“Learning to express myself”

“When the film negative and converting was used, the digital one is not the same thing.”

“Enthusiastic participants who develop their ideas with ambition and who work together. The remark on the evaluation sheet: ‘Your seminar was the best of all.’” (From German)

“New road to the direction of photography”

„Sometimes despite my experience of shooting stuff it can be quite intimidating when you come across talented students whose first language is digital and i feel like some analog dinosaur playing catch up. A group of such students came to me and said my workshops were the best thing they had done in their 3 years and that felt pretty good.”

“The best experience is continuous. I learn something new every time. Sometimes a change of perspective, an experiment I would not have initiated might be an eye opener etc. ...”

“Insight, knowledge, growing together” (From German)

“Always again the big eyes and the ‚Aha-moment“” (From German)

“It has been in Sao Paulo, Brazil. I taught cinematography to a group of young people of Italian descendant: probably one of the most interesting groups I ever had: smart, of fast learning and very hungry of cinema.”

“After a year of teaching I started to take didactic courses. Working on aligned classes, student participation, taking the theory to practice right away. This helped me so much. Changing the idea of being a teacher who is sort of a 'master' who knows everything and talks the whole class, to a teacher that facilitates a learning space where he/she helps the student learning at their own interest and level.

There's not really one experience... In all of my lessons I try to let them formulate ideas, analyse, interpretate. When I explain something technical I also try to explain why you need to know it, showing the artistic purpose of it. For me this works really well.”

“Some of my students have won either the golden Tadpole at Camerimage or have gained access to the master’s program of AFI and NFTS. Then you know you must be doing something good.”

“They won a documentary that I mentored.”

“Positive feedback from the international students.”

“I have to say that I really enjoy and be proud to come across my ex-students on film sets as they become CA's, DA's, PA's etc.”

“To see, how a research seminar together with ARRI brought the students one step ahead.” (From German)

“Every semester, I teach a short narrative film production class, and two cinematography classes. My production class selects (by student vote) one or more student-written projects to film. They edit the scripts, plan the shooting days, cast the actors, and then shoot the projects in four to six ten-hour long days, under my direct supervision. The actual number of shooting days depends on the length and complexity of the script that

is selected, but it is always at least four full days plus planning days. My classes teach the methodology and techniques of film production and cinematography, the actual shooting of the project is over and above the curriculum taught during my class time allocation.”

“To watch their films.”

“Getting invited to a party of my former students more than 3 years after they finished their studies.”

“In the school of cinema of Cuba EICTV where the cinema is lived with the students and one sees how they learn day by day. One year we shot a short film only with Shadows, the final result was fantastic.”

“I am always rejoicing when I see the learning success by the students.” (From German)

“Unmotivated students who get excited by cinema and surprise even their own teachers.”

“Getting good feedback from students who enjoyed the experience.”

“When the students are active and interested in the subject.”

“A group of trainees who lost time and space discovering the impact of the different focal lengths and who implemented their experiences afterwards very properly and adventurous.”

“I was asked to teach on how to light and execute a driving scene using green screen, process and poor-man’s. It was for the IATSE in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They had enlisted tremendous support in their electrical & grip resources. Years later I have had several of your students comment to me the benefits they received from that experience.”

“The comment ‘I’ve learned more in 3 days with you than I have in 3 years at film school’.”

“I discovered that one of my students who was particularly shy was an outstanding camera operator. It led to her daring to actually try to work within cinematography. I always love seeing when one of them has an eureka moment, when something they have found complicated suddenly falls into place.”

“What more joy than seeing many of my students as Independent Cinematographers now. Even a student from 2016 batch has become an independent cinematographer filming both feature films and documentaries.”

Question 7.3: What was the biggest disaster in one of your courses?

Open free text question

69 answers

13 out of 69 participants – this is 19 % – stated that they had not yet experienced any disaster in their teaching. 14 participants – 20 % – said that the reason for their biggest disaster in teaching happened due to their own responsibility, especially insufficient preparation. 28 participants – 41 % – said that their biggest disaster in teaching had been caused by one or more of their students. 8 participants – 12 % – told about technical problems as the key source of a disaster. Another 8 participants told about different incidents outside of their responsibility as the reason for the biggest disaster in their teaching.

Here is an answer from the first group: 13 out of 69 participants –19 % – stated that they had not yet experienced any disaster in their teaching:

“At the end of every semester, all of my classes come together to make one (or more) short film(s). In the past many of these films have won major awards in national and international film festivals. But, whether they win awards or not, they give my students valuable lessons in ‘real world’ production, because the students direct and crew the productions, I manage, teach, and backstop my students, so that they are safe and don’t fail (badly) during their productions. Some failures can be educational... A student can’t learn if they don’t have the opportunity to fail.”

Harry Mathias, SMPTE/AAUP, Professor at the San Jose State University, California, USA

Here is a selection from the second group: 14 participants – 20 % – said that the reason for their biggest disaster in teaching was to their own responsibility, especially insufficient preparation:

“When preparations had failed and I had to improvise too much. Also if my partner teachers are not committed enough it will live to me too heavy load or subjects which I’m not familiar with.”

Rauno Ronkainen, FSC, Aalto-University Helsinki Film School, Finland

“Not being prepared.”

Tony Costa, AIP, Head of Cinematography Department, Universidade Lusofona, Lisbon, Portugal

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“When a question was asked and I gave a wrong answer.”

Yoav Kosh, ACT, Beit Berl College, Faculty of Arts, Film Department, Israel

“I hate to come unprepared, so at the rarely occasions in which I haven’t been given enough time to do so properly I consider it a failure regardless of the reception from the students.”

Julio Gómez, ACTV, ECAM and EFTI, Spain

“Misplacing the marks I had assigned the students for their course and having to do it all again!”

Tim Fleming, ISC

“The biggest disaster was underestimating how hungry and smart my grad dip students were in a particular year. I couldn't do enough and the course structure not robust enough to keep them challenged. I was incredibly embarrassed by the.”

Kim Batterham, ACS, Head of Cinematography of the Australian Film Radio and TV School, Sydney, Australia

“Too many facts in too short time! No practice and too few breaks.”

Kim Høgh Mikkelsen, DFF, Head of Cinematography Department, The National Film-school of Denmark, Copenhagen

“Delivering a lecture in completely inappropriate setting, far removed from the students.”

Brendan Lavelle, ACS, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

“Losing my temper when a student didn't get it after the third time of explaining the same thing ... Soon after that I've realized that a situation like that is related mostly to the teacher/teaching rather than the student.”

Petru Maier, DFF, European Film College, Ebeltoft, Denmark

“People falling asleep from boredom of continuous listening without audiovisual examples or small group assignments due to my bad preparation of the lecture.”

Jouko Seppälä, FSC, Head of Film- and TV-Production Degree Programme at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

Anonymous answers from this group:

“Being unprepared as per answer to question 7.1! I fudged my way through it but it felt very unsatisfactory.”

“A chaotic workshop that wasn’t planned well. Too much effort for very little revenue.”
(From German)

“I did not show up because I had forgotten that I was scheduled.”

“Too many, I always try practical cutting edge demos and they can fail miserably.”

“Not having interceded in time during the realization and not having stopped a really poor piece of workmanship.” (From German)

Here is a selection from the third group: 28 participants – this is 41 % – said that their biggest disaster in teaching had been caused by one or more of their students:

“A group that made everything for not working hands on.”

Manuel Caballero, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

“Many years ago, I had to suspend a full course for its lack of responsibility in the end of year work. None of the students arrived at the time of filming and did not have the cameras clean or prepared.”

Alfonso Parra Redondo, AEC, EICTV Film and TV school of Cuba

“Arrogant students who thought they know all. We were filming a short film. Nothing was usable. The film stayed unfinished.”

Peter Zeitlinger, ASC/BVK, Professor for Image, Light and Space at the University of Television and Film Munich HFF, Germany

“One student checked all my utterances in a lecture on Film Language via internet on his cellphone and then confronted me in front of the class with my statistical errors on dates and interpretations of paintings I was referring to as references for the use of composition and color in cinematography.

A second big disaster was the explosion of costs on a practical workshop devoted to the use of cinemascope lenses. Accidents and other disasters rocketed costs so much that I couldn't do another practical workshop that year.”

Michael Hammon, BVK, Professor at the Film-University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“I had the worst experience when I had a course with 6 students. No planning worked for me. I had problems to achieve the minimum quorum so that they could assemble the equipment and operate them properly in the practical exercises”

Jorge González, ACC, Universidad del Desarrollo / Universidad de Chile

“It happens rarely (I hope)! But it is after a class where you thought you were crystal clear and you realize some students did not get it!”

Bruno Philip, CSC, Université de Montréal, Canada

“I was teaching the first cinematography session of a course in Sierra Leone. We did 3 hours in the lecture room before lunch. There was no interaction from the students; no answers to questions, no laughing at funnier moments, nothing at all. I really felt that the lecture had crashed and that I had lost the students. The lack of response or enthusiasm began to affect me. My enthusiasm dived. I was really struggling. Finally lunch time came and they all left. I was certain they would not return. The course supervisor arrived and asked how it went. I explained that it was a disaster. He replied ‘no, you're completely wrong. If no one left they must have loved it. They usually walk out pretty quick if they don't rate it.’

So the disaster wasn't really a disaster but I learned that it really helps to have an understanding of student reaction and interaction before teaching in different cultural environments.”

Mark Carey, Head of Cinematography of the Northern Film School, Leeds, UK

“Students didn't read and prepare for classes.”

Donald Bryant, AMC, CCC, CUEC, SAEI Institute and others, México

“I don't care about little problems such as camera troubles and small fights. Sometimes they need them. But most big headaches are their social attitude. In Japan, young people have a distance from social rules, especially the collaboration with others. They often got troubles with people in locations.”

Makoto Watanabe, JSC, Professor at the Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences, Tokyo, Japan

“In 1993, in my second year as a freelance teacher, I held a five days seminar ‘Electronic Cinematography’ together with Detlef Möllering at a training center for freelancers. Detlef and I had developed this seminar on our own, we held it for the third time. We had quite an impressive set up with three professional broadcast camcorders, light and test equipment. On the second day of the seminar one of the cameras – worth 15.000 € at that time – was missing. The head of the training center was startled, but after a short discussion we began in time. The searching for the camera took place in the background. From time to time participants were called out of the seminar to be questioned about the camera. We noticed that one of the participants was getting more and more nervous. The whole situation became more and more uncomfortable. Just before lunch break the head of the training center came with two policemen to get this participant out of the seminar room. After lunch break we continued without him. Nobody gave us an explanation so far. So it was quite challenging for us to keep our minds and those of the remaining participants focused on the topic. In the evening we heard the result: The nervous participant had stated that he had come by train on that day. But by chance the facility manager had seen his car parking around the corner. So they called back the police, who had already left. The participant had to open his car boot. There was the camera. His reaction: ‘I really don't know how it came here.’ But the head of the training center filed a charge against him. After that the participant said: ‘Well, as you have your camera back now, I would like to continue the seminar.’ Just incredible. Of course he got barred.

I had to think about this betrayal for quite a time and really had to work on regaining my confidence into my participants that they deserve.” (From German)

Peter C. Slansky, FK TG, Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film (HFF) Munich, Germany

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“Students were too impatient – they wanted to be learning topics that I was saving for later in the term.”

Danny Nowak, CSC, Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada

“When some students refused to work on a practical workshop I've organized because they felt overwhelmed by other classes and had to complete other homework/ so I gave them a short verbal lecture about set etiquette (who's the boss), the chance they have to be here (at the school), then I gave them 60' to finish their other work, and I left. 10' later they called back asking me to resume the class and apologized profusely.

When students go online and check your course information in real time, and pretend they know better: when so, I overturn the class and those students become teachers under the other's scrutiny: works very well...”

Philippe Cordey, SCS/BVK, ERACOM, Lausanne, Switzerland

“Uninterested students who believe that cinematography is just making everything look beautiful.”

Gabriel Hernández Tinajero, Documenta A.C., Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México City

Anonymous answers from this group:

“The participants had expectations that neither matched to the announcement nor to their skills.” (From German)

“To stand in front of a group of ‘students’ with no interest in the subject but only in their grade.” (From German)

“One participant did not want to take part because the shooting should be in a hospital. All the other participants identified themselves with this case and refused to work, too.” (From German)

“A student can't learn if they don't have the opportunity to fail.”

“Worst case is student not turning up for practical seminars.”

“It was on a practical workshop. Student director and producers wanted to deliver some shots in green screen for an augmented reality video installation. Many extras were involved, but due to budget limitation and logistics we only had a little studio to shoot in

and a very small green screen. We tried to convince the student director and tutor to reconsider the shooting, but failed, so we ended up shooting the actors very close to the green screen with no chance to use a backlight. The result was awful. Luckily, it turned out that the ghostly figures that came out in the compositing were very appropriate for the matter of the installation, so everyone was happy with it (except of course me and my students)."

"One of the student accidentally broke the camera I hired from the rental house :-)"

"The students who think just about their diplomas."

"Not getting rehired because criticizing students for lack of interest (parents used to be VIPs ...)."

"At the end of every semester, all of my classes come together to make one (or more) short film(s). In the past many of these films have won major awards in national and international film festivals. But, whether they win awards or not, they give my students valuable lessons in 'real world' production, because the students direct and crew the productions, I manage, teach, and backstop my students, so that they are safe and don't fail (badly) during their productions. Some failures can be educational..."

"Hearing that students were disappointed."

"When the students act like they know already everything."

"A group of twelve students who had nothing to say in the film analysis of the exposition of 'Mc Cabe & Mrs. Miller' instead of: 'Just boring.'" (From German)

"No one wanted to ask any questions."

Here is a selection from the fourth group: 8 participants – 12 % – told about technical problems as the key source of a disaster:

"Getting a black out during an 80 student lecture."

Mick van Rossum, NSC, Head of Cinematography of The National Film Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

"during a night exterior workshop the helium filling of the balloon light went out because it had been calculated wrongly..." (From German)

Pierre Mennel, SCS, Professor for Cinematography at the z hdk Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“A brand new Amira went wrong in recording, later showed vertical green lines on playback. It was sent back to ARRI and then after they said it was some system error. Motherboard has been removed and changed. Never happened before with any professional camera or gear.”

Vladan Pavic, SAS, Professor at the National Film and Theatre School, Faculty of Drama Arts (FDU), Belgrade, Serbia

“When the projector at Camerimage would not show the iTunes material I had prepared: 300 people in the audience were treated to a lecture for 3 hours where I had only 25% of the prepared material available!”

Oliver Stapleton, BSC, Co-Head of Cinematography of the National Film and Television School (NFTS), Beaconsfield/London, UK

“2017, when the stereokino was closed at the Faculty of Animation Directors.”

Alexandr Melkumov, RGC/SMPTE, The All-Russian state institute of cinematography of S.A. Gerasimov VGIK, Moscow, Russia

Anonymous answers from this group:

“Arriving well prepared with a computer or projector that does not work properly.”

“Using tape-based cameras.”

“equipment didn’t work” (From German)

“broken practical light”

Here is a selection from the last group: 8 participants told about different incidents outside of their responsibility as the reason for the biggest disaster in their teaching:

“My second stereo 3D masterclass had no audience at all! It was misorganized, so when they repeated it 20 days later, the room was full.”

Argyris Theos, GSC, Me / HDSEminars, Athens, Greece

“There was never a big disaster, but it is annoying that time is often too short to analyze the results of practical workshops, so some lecture days became longer and longer.”
(From German)

Susanne Schüle, DFA, Professor at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“Having to argue with other staff members who do not put the student experience first.”

David Neal, BAFTA, Lead Senior Technical Instructor Cinematography and Postproduction at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

Question 7.4: Which of your own examples of teaching worked especially well?

Open free text question

65 answers

Nearly all participants in this question named specific lectures. Here is a selection:

“My favorite lesson is to start with curtains drawn in a lecture room - the only light coming from overhead fluorescent lighting. I pick on a suitable student and point a digital camera at him/her and feed the image to the overhead projector. I show the class that with such lighting I can get a nice image – I color balance – I introduce ND and drop the background out of focus. The image looks good but a little flat. I explain that this is perfectly good for a lot of documentary. But if we shoot for drama we need to change this. I turn the lights off. I open one of the curtains allowing the light to fall across my subject. Suddenly there is drama in the image, there is contrast and chiaroscuro. There is depth and three-dimensionality. I show how the contrast can be controlled using a white reflector and how it can be increased using negative fill with a black flag. In a simple example I have shown the whole class the basics of cinematic lighting.”

John Podpadec, GTC, University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK

“I have designed the concept of lighting practice called ‘one set one light source’. Students must create the lighting for film set only with one lamp. They must use all the basic tools like reflectors, flag, cutter, diffusion frames, mirrors and gels. That is something which challenges them to plan well and use their ingenuity for lighting.”

Tommi Moilanen, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland

"I find sessions that turn theory into practice work well. We will start a studio based workshop with an explanation of the techniques we want to apply. Specifically we will look at the creative potential of these techniques. I will show examples and discuss. The students then rig the gear and set about shooting a brief that links to this. One of my favorite examples is a slow motion workshop. Unusually for this workshop I act as the Cinematographer with a hint of 1st AD. We push rapidly through a set of slow motion shots, each more complex than the last. We shoot on 2 cameras at the same time and reset lighting for each shot. The students are both in front and behind the camera. We move fast (for students) rotating roles as the scale of the set-ups grow. On the surface it would appear to be just a workshop about slow motion but it achieves a number of other things. Students have to work at a speed they are not used to, they see how a whole set can move with purpose. They swap roles and have to set camera and lights for different scenarios and shooting speeds. This means they really have to be on top of the technical. Most of all it's a lot fun and the effective working of the big crew at such a speed builds on their sense of camaraderie. I usually schedule this to be the last formal cinematography session before the students head into their major shoots."

Mark Carey, Head of Cinematography of the Northern Film School, Leeds, UK

"'The 58 minute film challenge'. The students enter a room and there are cameras already set up with audio plugged in. There is also an edit suite training lab already booted up and ready to go. They are put into groups of 10 and given a multiple choice short script and told that they have to conceive, plan, direct, act, shoot, edit and be ready to present a 58 second film - ALL IN 58 MINUTES!

It seems like a bit of a fun exercise, but it is a clever psychological experiment. Each group approaches it in a slightly different way. The whole exercise is really about adapting, team work and blocking through a script quickly. It's not about filming, or even the technical aspect of camerawork (they're deliberately not allowed lights or anything that can slow them down). I had an email from a student afterwards saying it was the best thing she had done in three years of the course!"

David Neal, BAFTA, Lead Senior Technical Instructor Cinematography and Postproduction at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

"When I speak from my professional experience, the students become more interested. Now I teach using examples from my professional work for everything, that way my students feel they are getting real knowledge."

Manuel Caballero, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

"I regard myself as more of a Mentor than a Teacher. I allow the students to work things out for themselves, and not be afraid of failure. I see no point in simply teaching students to copy what can be done before - the mission is to take what is useful from the past, and then allow the Students to move things forward into the future. Some of these things will not be to my taste - that is the nature of change. There is a great deal to be learned from 'The Masters', but a heavy handed approach is not what interests me. Building confidence is probably the most important thing that teachers can do for students - without this no Graduate will be able to cope with the demands of the job."

Oliver Stapleton, BSC, Co-Head of Cinematography of the National Film and Television School (NFTS), Beaconsfield/London, UK

"Relighting, rebuilding and re-filming scenes from famous movies in the studio."

Peter Zeitlinger, ASC/BVK, Professor for Image, Light and Space at the University of Television and Film Munich HFF, Germany

"The best experience and I have sensed the students appreciate is to shoot a scene or a short film and I as teacher playing the role of director. It seems that the students get the sense of being in a real set."

Tony Costa, AIP, Head of Cinematography Department, Universidade Lusofona, Lisbon, Portugal

"Before my professorship at the HFF Munich: 'Electronic Cinematography'. In this five day's workshop Detlef Möllering and I taught how to achieve a 'film look' with the broadcast video cameras of that time. This had its limits, but Detlef and I had been writing the 'Handbook of the professional Video Camera' and by this we were on top of the actual development."

Today, at the HFF Munich, I think my best lectures are 'Workflow with the digital Film Camera', 'The Lens and the Look' and 'Classic Film Trick Technique'." (From German)

Peter C. Slansky, FK TG, Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film (HFF) Munich, Germany

"I often begin with an experiential exercise: I separate them in couples, then give them a drawing and a piece of paper. Without watching or discussing, one has to define the drawing, the other has to draw it. Then I mix all results, so no one gets embarrassed. We

see and discuss them. In 95% of the cases, the result has limited resemblance to the original. This helps them understand that the visual language is totally different to the verbal one.”

Argyris Theos, GSC, Me / HD Seminars, Athens, Greece

“The best lectures are those, where I can bring in my personal professional experiences as a female cinematographer and show own film examples. The students appreciate when the knowledge presented is authentic and based on a personal base.” (From German)

Susanne Schüle, DFA, Professor at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“I conduct a workshop in which the students apply all the material studied and shoot a short film on one day with my presence and guidance.”

Yoav Kosh, ACT, Beit Berl College, Faculty of Arts, Film Department, Israel

“We have some ‘dogmas’; students learn the most of their mistakes. We are calling it ‘controlled crashing’. We are not making movies, the students make them, so they are responsible for their own work. Our education is scheduled around 6 months of group effort film making; documentary, fiction and commercials. In the months around it we teach technology, social skills etcetera.”

Mick van Rossum, NSC, Head of Cinematography of The National Film Academy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

“Teaching with other teachers and from multiple aspects.”

Rauno Ronkainen, FSC, Aalto-University Helsinki Film School, Finland

“I’m a big believer in humor as a tool. A lesson taught with humor is a lesson learned. I try as hard as I can to avoid entering into an ‘automatic pilot mode’ at all costs.”

Julio Gómez, ACTV, ECAM and EFTI, Spain

"I am a strong believer of mixing practice with as little theory as possible. The students spend most part of their time in theory classes and it's my duty to bring them back to earth. I want them to express themselves with images not concepts..."

Bruno Philip, CSC, Université de Montréal, Canada

"I find short visual examples of work that provoke conversation around specific topics work best in the academic situation and hands on practical examples in the practice."

Tim Fleming, ISC

"We began a Bachelor's course in 2015 which is still evolving. It uses a traditional university structure of lecture, tutorial and workshop. For a time in the course we were able to use more abstract ideas to teach rather than the more common technical approach. This was centered around 'Why' rather than 'How'. This was successful even if it wasn't immediately apparent to students at the time. That particular course has become more production based so there is less opportunity to do it this way. I think technique should go hand in hand with the interpretation and understanding of story. I try hard not to give students answers but to provide opportunities for them to discover the answer."

Kim Batterham, ACS, Head of Cinematography of the Australian Film Radio and TV School, Sydney, Australia

"Telling a story by using small props such as The Sun, The Moon & Earth to exemplify the changes of light! Letting young students to get their hand on a professional camera and giving the opportunity to 'Loose The Fear' of holding it and using it!"

Rene Gaston, AMC, Universidad Iberoamericana, México City

"In lighting, mimicry the natural lighting. For composition, the harmony and balance of golden ratio. In digital cinematography class, tests and discussions on grading suite and comparing mediums (analog-digital)."

Alexandru Sterian, RSC, Senior Lecturer PhD at the UNATC I L Caragiale Bucharest, Babes Bolyai University Cluj Napoca, Romania

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“In explaining optics I like to give the students the opportunity to attempt a 'dolly-zoom' shot. It really cements the power and personality of each lens in a hands-on environment. It also shows the importance and complexity of each component of the camera and grip team.”

Karl Herrmann, CSC, Capilano University, Vancouver, Canada

“Participating, practical hands on workshops where students have to do their own researches and apply them. I consider myself more a supervisor/mentor, certainly not a frontal teacher/lecturer in the strict sense of term. PowerPoint is a big no-no.”

Philippe Cordey, SCS/BVK, ERACOM, Lausanne, Switzerland

“Being honest with the students in representing the actual life of a working cinematographer. Good years, Lean years, good times, bad times. (Mostly good.)”

Ciaran Tanham, President of the Irish Society of Cinematographers (ISC), Griffith College, Dublin, Ireland

“Small groups and 50 minutes theoretical courses.”

Hratch Tokatlian, Assistant Professor at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut, Lebanon

“10 slides, 20 minutes, 30 point font, small group tasks in between.”

Jouko Seppälä, FSC, Head of Film- and TV-Production Degree Programme at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

“Introduce the theme and adjust together with the students

Expectation voting

Teach to ask and teach to the individual.”

Kim Høgh Mikkelsen, DFF, Head of Cinematography Department, The National Film-school of Denmark, Copenhagen

“Getting students to nominate a scene from a favourite movie, then analyzing the stylistic approach and lighting, framing, etc. Afterwards having them try to re-create the shot in teams.”

Brendan Lavelle, ACS, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

“Explaining technique in a simple fashion.”

Ruurd M. Fenenga, NSC

“What works best for me is to start from a concrete example of my work and from there to structure a class.”

Jorge González, ACC, Universidad del Desarrollo / Universidad de Chile

*“Look development,
creation of light & shadow ”*

Matthias Bolliger, DFA, Hamburg, Germany

“Telling stories of my experiences on set shooting films.”

Danny Nowak, CSC, Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada

“(It still works...) A combination of elements of theory and technique is clearly my approach, with a touch of aesthetics. My course is usually a long one without ‘normal’ time-constraints and restriction as in a typical ‘class’: it is based on the microcosm of an average shooting day. We start with a possible camera set-up, we rehearse and then proceed with lighting. Then we shift positions in the ‘crew’; finally we review the day's work, providing feedback on camera movement and composition, as well as on the aesthetic choices in lighting matters.”

Dimitris Theodoropoulos, GSC, Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Fine Arts, Cinema Department, Greece

“My students are ethnically, culturally and gender diverse, their stories and the projects that we produce are diverse, and my teaching respects differing worldviews, cultures, and points of view. During our productions they learn to work together as a team

towards the common goal of creating filmic art that fosters human communication and understanding.

I guide this team effort, but I don't dictate its direction, my students do. But, as you know well, it takes more time and effort to "lead a class from behind" than to direct a path from the front of the class as I do during my regular class curriculum. These projects are all led from behind with the expenditure of huge amounts of my effort."

Harry Mathias, SMPTE/AAUP, Professor at the San Jose State University, California, USA

"1. Getting students to shoot improvised scenes with good actors and analysing the the work immediately afterwards with others in the group.

2. A four day lecture with practical inputs on Film Language. I work through different forms of Film language and analyse the visual techniques of films from different eras with the students. A basic practical workshop afterwards cements the feeling for camera movement, static shots or quite simply the importance of the camera axis.

3. Getting students of cinematography to direct one another in the making of short documentary films."

Michael Hammon, BVK, Professor at the Film-University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

"The practical exercise in the Basic Camera Course, where the student has to execute 6 shots with 3 different lenses (wide, normal, tele) on a set up consisting of two persons, spaced 2 meters deep, one meter wide, facing the camera. The first 3 shots should be done from the same station point with all three lenses and the remaining three should have the same framing on the foreground persons. Special emphasis is laid on the requirement of not moving 'the actors' between shots, exactly because beginners in this field have a hard time accepting the widely big differences between how different lenses photograph the world."

Petru Maier, DFF, European Film College, Ebeltoft, Denmark

"that depends very much on the students!" (From German)

Pierre Mennel, SCS, Professor for Cinematography at the z hdk Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland

“The exercise I most enjoy applying is called ‘Space’. I normally require 10 still photographs or 10 short and edited shots where a director creates an atmosphere, an emotion. We are not trying to tell a story yet, just to create a feeling using light, frame, exposition, color, texture and the staging. For example: Fear, cold, loneliness, anguish, peace. The evaluation of this exercise is important, we screen it in class and the group gives their opinion, what they felt and we discuss the results with the director.”

Gabriel Hernández Tinajero, Documenta A.C., Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México City

Anonymous answers to this question:

“To teach studio work” (From German)

“Light exercises in studio”

“Light and color.

Learning the discipline to expose film stock.

Integrating photography in exercises.”

“A lecture where I teach the impact of available light in various interior or exterior sets to a group of six video journalists. The goal is to learn to see the light, with respect to the latitude of a semiprofessional digital camera.” (From German)

“I think it works well when I ask the students to mimic the frame of a movie just using the right lens, depth of field, composition and only one light source and a bounce board.”

“My best experience is working with a specific feedback method where the students give each other feedback on their projects following a strict feedback procedure. The students learn formulating and communicating about their projects and they (and the teacher) see from every individual student (the quiet and the loud) their knowledge.

For this I use a simplified version of the DasArts feedback method, the whole method you can find here: <https://vimeo.com/97319636>. I use only small parts of this in my class since I work with first year students in smaller projects.”

“The nature of light, color theory.”

“Point of interest in every shot”

“Cross platform teaching between animation and film students. Engaging them to work together on a VFX-heavy project. Motion control/ motion capture and green screen technologies combined with the experience that film students have in actual production. A possible recopy for disaster but it works out every single time...”

“Talking about my own work

- *Being open about the ups and downs*
- *Sharing bad artistic and career choices*
- *Talking about safety on the set.”*
- *“1. Getting students to shoot improvised scenes with good actors and analyzing the the work immediately afterwards with others in the group.*
- *2. A four day lecture with practical inputs on Film Language. I work through different forms of Film language and analyze the visual techniques of films from different eras with the students. A basic practical workshop afterwards cements the feeling for camera movement, static shots or quite simply the importance of the camera axis.*
- *3. Getting students of cinematography to direct one another in the making of short documentary films.”*

“Using Kolb experiential teaching cycle. Using mindfulness exercises in the beginning of the class. Using film history chronology to teach film language elements through practical exercises. And so many more.”

“The creative use of LUTS, through examples of my own work.”

“Let students shoot the same scene in groups and compare the results directly afterwards.”

“Well, I do use my own cinematographic work often to demonstrate lighting design. As well as my teaching methodology of Zone System. Previsualisation also works well.”

“I like teaching small classes, and I like working with students I get a chance to know. I like having a dialogue with my students. Most of my courses, whether they are geared towards camera, dramaturgy or light, usually begin with a lecture, film examples and discussions. Then we move into implementing what we have discussed, and I take the role as tutor.”

“The examples from movies I worked as a cinematographer.”

Question 7.5: If you could start again today: What would you do differently with your entry into teaching?

Open free text question

69 answers

31 out of 69 participants – this is 45 % – described specific approaches what they would do differently. Another 15 participants – 15 % – wrote that they wished they would have developed their didactics more systematically. 23 participants in this question – 33 % – declared that they would not change anything.

Here is a selection from the first group: 31 out of 69 participants – this is 45 % – described specific approaches what they would do differently:

“I would have started my academic career a bit earlier – maybe. To be honest though I do not know for sure!”

Dimitris Theodoropoulos, GSC, Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Fine Arts, Cinema Department, Greece

“I would have started earlier.”

Argyris Theos, GSC, Me / HDSEminars, Athens, Greece

“It is important not to start teaching too early. Profound basis of experience and knowledge is fundamental which young teachers never can offer. I started very early but was happy to grow with my work as cinematographer which grew with my teaching experience as well.”

Peter Zeitlinger, ASC/BVK, Professor for Image, Light and Space at the University of Television and Film Munich HFF, Germany

“I wished that at the beginning I would have had good teaching scripts and material from colleagues with more teaching experience. But I had not, so I had to put a lot of work into developing it on my own.” (From German)

Susanne Schüle, DFA, Professor at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

“Easy to say: By this experience of course - but I'm quite satisfied that I realized already early that I have to do the work in order to develop myself as a teacher.”

Rauno Ronkainen, FSC, Aalto-University Helsinki Film School, Finland

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

“I'd start from what I know now about interacting with the students.”

Jouko Seppälä, FSC, Head of Film- and TV-Production Degree Program at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

“Not talk so much but show stuff and get the students to discuss more.”

John Podpadec, GTC, University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK

“Not be as ambitious as I first was. Take time to cover topics well and be sure the students get it.”

Tim Fleming, ISC

“Don't go into Higher Education with the word 'technical' attached to you. There is a real class system where the academic staff get paid more and have more opportunities for research, leave etc. On a set, I am respected, yet within academia, practice-oriented staff are seen as 'brown coat' lab staff.”

David Neal, BAFTA, Lead Senior Technical Instructor Cinematography and Postproduction at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

“Smaller student groups and smaller sets to work with in the beginning.”

Tommi Moilanen, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland

“I will try the opposite way next time. I should start from film analysis, then editing next. Camera operating the last.”

Makoto Watanabe, JSC, Professor at the Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences, Tokyo, Japan

“Understand that students are young and not industry vets. They must be treated accordingly.”

Karl Herrmann, CSC, Capilano University, Vancouver, Canada

"Find out more about what the students really want to learn."

Michael Hammon, BVK, Professor at the Film-University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany

"Be more relaxed: this ain't no regular school but a vocational training workshop..."

Philippe Cordey, SCS/BVK, ERACOM, Lausanne, Switzerland

"Would give more to joint practical studies of directors and operators."

Alexandr Melkumov, RGC/SMPTE, The All-Russian state institute of cinematography of S.A. Gerasimov VGIK, Moscow, Russia

"Be less worried about imparting my knowledge and personal experience."

Ciaran Tanham, President of the Irish Society of Cinematographers (ISC), Griffith College, Dublin, Ireland

"I would convince dean and authorities to buy more lights and lighting equipment. Our school studio is almost empty."

Vladan Pavic, SAS, Professor at the National Film and Theatre School, Faculty of Drama Arts (FDU), Belgrade, Serbia

"I think I would try to simplify the content even more. My mistake, I think, was to try and deliver too much information in the beginning. I find that this leads to an over-load and students can disengage."

Brendan Lavelle, ACS, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Anonymous answers from this group:

"There is no easy way, you have to experience it and find your feet in your own way."

"Do some training on teaching technique parallel to starting out."

"I would prepare myself much better on the teaching methodology side before starting teaching."

“Probably I would spend more time listening from participants, what do they do, what do they expect from a workshop like that.”

“Teach only what I know best, not always easy in the school framework.”

“Not much. I regret to have to let go of the advanced film course under pressure of the film coordinator that needed to reform the curriculum. Students seem to love film more than I expected.”

“Shooting on film stock.”

“Select students by looking at their 5 photos.”

“perhaps being less humble. should I be less honest ...?? watching my back.”

“I would do more research as to how others have reached, since I had no previous film school experience.”

“I do not know, maybe prepare some academic aspects better, as for example the methodology or the final objectives.”

“Teach only what I know best, not always easy in the school framework.”

“Take a longer course (more than 3 months) in ‘Adult Teaching Methods and Strategies’”

“Too many technologies have changed to be able to answer.”

“Maybe keep off the payroll for a bit longer and do less regular teaching and more shooting.”

“Probably I would spend more time listening from participants, what do they do, what do they expect from a workshop like that.”

“Not much. I regret to have to let go of the advanced film course under pressure of the film coordinator that needed to reform the curriculum. Students seem to love film more than I expected.”

“Shooting on a film stock.”

Here is a selection from the second group: 15 participants – 22 % – wrote that they liked to develop their didactics more systematically:

“I would try to seek out any workshops or courses on Higher Education teaching. They demystify academic speak and reassure that our practical workshop interactive approach is often the right approach.”

Mark Carey, Head of Cinematography of the Northern Film School, Leeds, UK

“Teach in the ability ‘how to learn’. What is the individual student’s goal - and individualize the classes by own solo-studies. The ability to learn is strongest when the interest is strong and personal.”

Kim Høgh Mikkelsen, DFF, Head of Cinematography Department, The National Film-school of Denmark, Copenhagen

“Definitely, I would change the way I performed the evaluations. Assessing knowledge is perhaps the greatest deficiency that have who teach and come from the world of work.”

Jorge González, ACC, Universidad del Desarrollo / Universidad de Chile

“I would certainly have studied the craft of teaching straight away. Also after the first year I would have spent more time examining the detail of my workshops, why they were there, legacy or a connection to an overall structure of learning. A lot of what we know can be hidden because we have accumulated and interpreted our experience along the way. It has taken quite a few years to examine my own practice to see its flaws and strengths. I think cinematography is a complex discipline to teach because it relies on a diverse range of skills in many situations. One of the most powerful things that shaped me was discovering how strong the emotional connection I could have with the people I filmed, through the lens.”

Kim Batterham, ACS, Head of Cinematography of the Australian Film Radio and TV School, Sydney, Australia

Anonymous answers from this group:

“I never planned to start teaching, it just happened, so maybe I would have planned more. I would have saved more of the examples my teachers showed me while they taught me, and taken more notes rather than just listening raptly. Some films are hard to come by today, and some of our older lecturers were outstanding - I wish I could save their lectures for posterity.”

“I would advise everybody to try to follow didactic training about integrated authentic learning, but not from the start. First develop your own teaching style. Make mistakes, discover what you like and not like. Discover your teacher’s identity.”

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

Here is a selection from the last group: 23 participants in this question – 33 % – declared that they would not change anything:

“Interestingly I can think of anything of importance. Technology took an enormous leap forward in last 30 years but cinematography in the principle is still the same.”

Robert Buchar, Professor at the Columbia College Chicago, USA

“I think it would change very little, because, for obvious reasons, the process of comparing the photochemical with the digital, understanding the importance of both in the current world.”

Gabriel Hernández Tinajero, Documenta A.C., Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México City

“That is a purely hypothetical question, because a beginning is always based on inexperience. To overcome inexperience and lack of methodology at the beginning of a teaching career will always remain singular. I was very lucky not to start teaching at the University with students but at vocational training institutions with professional free lancers paying the fees. Now, as a professional teacher, I can't imagine to start again from the beginning and do everything in a different way.” (From German)

Peter C. Slansky, FK TG, Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film (HFF) Munich, Germany

“nothing... but I wish that the academization of the universities would be turned back. universities produce academics. arts schools shall produce artistic personalities. successful art never came from academic circumstances!” (From German)

Pierre Mennel, SCS, Professor for Cinematography at the z hdk Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland

Anonymous answers from this group:

“I have learned the most as a cinematographer from teaching, so I don't think I could change anything.”

“nothing, mistakes from the beginning are unavoidable, and as my head of bachelors tells us, next year a chance to do it better.”

“None. Though I started shooting films from 1987, I have always followed video technology, and worked with it. So my understandings of digital technologies were also developing parallel to my understanding of photo-chemical process.”

Do you want to be named as the author of your answers 7.1 through 7.5? (All your other information in other modules remain anonymous in any case!)

49 out of 88 answers were “Yes”.

Conclusions Module 7: Tell us Your Story!

“How was your very first course?” A quarter of the participants wrote that their first course went quite well. The eleventh part wrote that there were no special incidents. A third of the participants wrote that they had been very excited and nervous. Another quarter remembered that they had made serious methodological mistakes in their first lecture. The last two groups together are 58 %, the majority of the participants. Only six participants wrote that they couldn’t remember this event at all. In the contrary, 92 % of the participants have a precise memory about their teaching debut. For a majority this debut as a teacher is associated with a bundle of highly emotional, sometimes contradicting, personal experiences. These experiences base on their personal uncertainty in a new role model and the struggle to transfer their competence in cinematography into teaching cinematography. Here is a striking citation: *“Stepping from behind the camera to the front was quite a big step.”*

This is also revealed by a cross-check with question 7.5. The challenge of transforming one’s own competence in cinematography onto teaching is an adventure that has to be told like a hero’s journey. This is the dominating narrative. Its domination is explained by the fact that here only the “survivors” – those who are still teaching – were asked to tell their story. The stories of the others – those who gave up after their first attempts, those who gave up after a longer period of teaching, those who never agreed to a call for teaching and those who were never asked to give a lesson – are not told here (although their stories might be touching enough to be told as well).

“What was your best experience in one of your courses?” Most of the answers to this question are about positive learning moments, often described as “Eureka-events”, or about positive feedback from the students. Inspiration “back” onto the own creative work also belongs to the positive outcomes of teaching cinematography. By this the circle becomes complete: After all, it was their creative work why they were called for teaching.

„What was the biggest disaster in one of your courses?“ This question is a mirror to the former question. (Only) less than a fifth of the participants wrote that they did not face a real disaster in their teaching (yet). Another fifth wrote that they saw the reason for their biggest teaching disaster in their own mistakes, mainly in bad preparation (a time investment that in many cases is not paid...). More than 40 % of the participants stated that their biggest disaster in teaching goes back to one or more of their students or course participants. The more conciliatory narratives are about positive feedback being missed. The more dramatic narratives are about explicitly negative teaching experiences caused by single inappropriate behavior of students or wrecked group interaction. They are taken very seriously because the learning group is widely associated with the film team – another result of self-taught teaching methods. 12 % of the participants quote technical problems as a reason for their biggest teaching disaster, another 12 % write about other reasons outside of their responsibility. Altogether, the reasons for teaching disasters are mainly about wrecked socio-technical interaction between teachers and learners as well as between learners among themselves.

„Which of your own examples of teaching worked especially well?“ This question evoked a wide variety of concrete descriptions covering the full range of topics and methods of teaching cinematography. They can be seen as a collection of best practice examples. But a cross-check with question 3.2 comes as a surprise: “Lighting” had been stated to be the most important teaching subject – here it plays a minor part, most of the examples are about simulating the work of a film crew on the set.

“If you could start again today: What would you do differently with your entry into teaching?“ 45 % – nearly every second – described concrete approaches. Another 22 % stated that they would like to develop their didactic methods more systematically. On the other side 33 % stated that they did neither see a reason nor a possibility to do anything differently. In other words: Two-thirds of the participants would have done several things differently if they could start teaching again today. This is another indicator for their ability to self-criticism. It also reflects the wide-spread autodidact approach of their teaching.

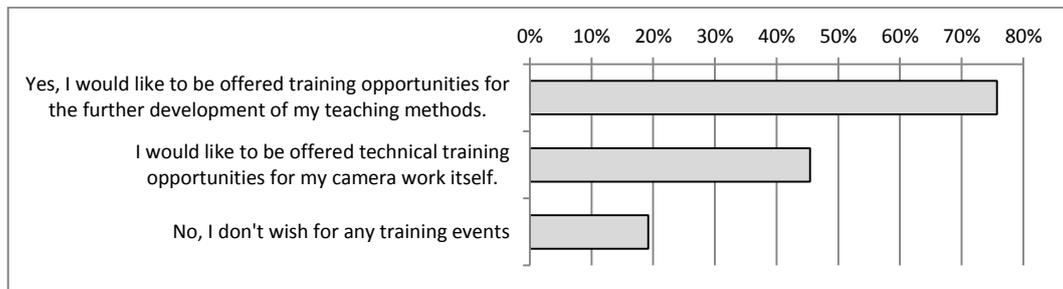
More than half of the participants in question module 7 wanted to give their statements by name. This displays the awareness of authorship among the cinematographers, which is no surprise.

Module 8: Concluding Questions

Question 8.1: Do you wish for advanced training opportunities specifically for your teaching?

Multiple answer question

99 answers



Do you have special wishes for trainings (camerawork or teaching methods)?

Open free text question

34 free text answers

Any number of ideas could be listed; a selection:

"Exchange of ideas sessions with others teaching in same area are very useful."

"Camerawork wise. Future/new technologies."

"I would like the manufacturers to offer institutions accreditation e.g. ARRI, Red, Sony, Panavision."

"Sustenaibility@cinematography"

"New equipment and digital film technologies"

"Color grading"

"I would like to know teaching methods"

"I would like more awareness of how other people teach cinematography"

"A forum to exchange ideas and experiences with other teaching professionals"

"Lens, light and photochemical laboratory"

"HDR/ color grading management/ VFX/ Camera movement, Grip/ Safety on set"

“To learn the most up to date methods of teaching and new technologies relating to cinematography”

“Start SHOOTING and NEVER STOP!”

“Thank you, I will love to upscale my camerawork and teaching methods”

“The interaction with new media, 360° and VR for further development of entertainment business”

“Didactics for example film education and transmedia” (From German)

“I have written several books myself, the latest is: ‘The Death & Rebirth of Cinema: MASTERING THE ART OF CINEMATOGRAPHY IN THE DIGITAL CINEMA AGE’, by Harry Mathias, (Waterfront Press, Published Dec. 2015, ISBN 978-1943625147”

“Getting insights in the complete chain of professional production nowadays, as in practice you usually only bother with one aspect of it”

“A guide for better teaching procedures”

“Course syllabus and structure or outline”

“To include and collaborate with pedagogical studies on the development of teaching methods. Collaboration between film schools in general.”

“I am most interested in the dramaturgical components of cinematography. These are the topics that do not age, while technology soon becomes dated.”

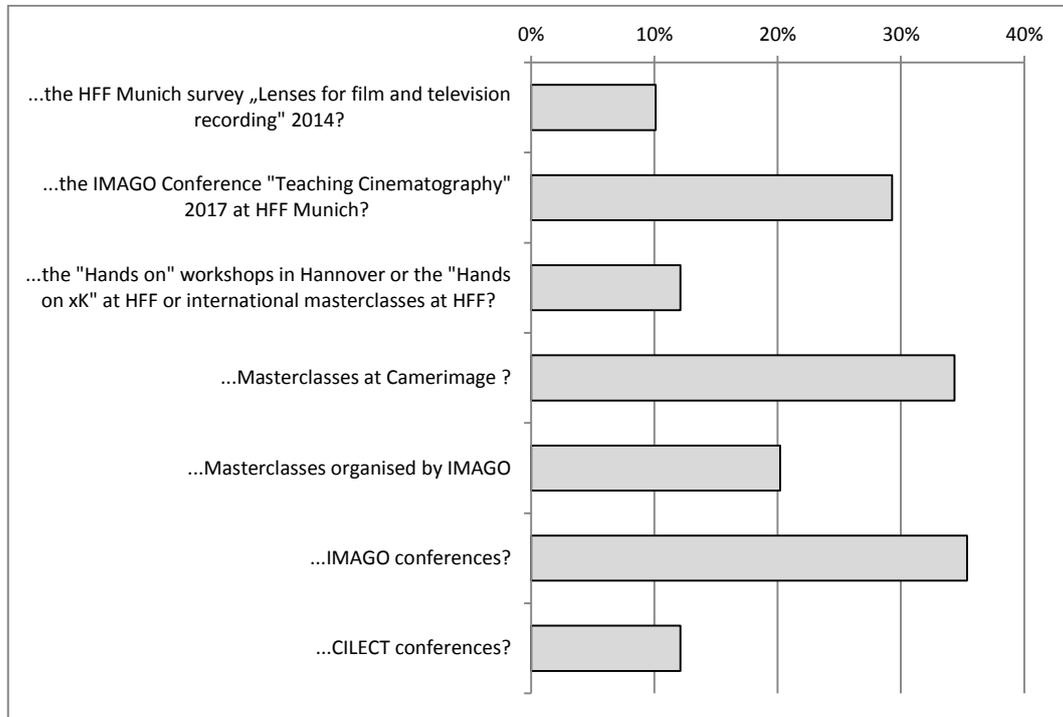
“Modern approaches to teaching cinematography in a cost effective way”

“Creating a network where we can exchange work methodology and teaching methods is crucial. I am convinced of this, because I studied at two schools in different countries, and learning about other working methods enriches your own process. I believe an exchange of teachers is important, travelling 15 days to another country, another school to teach and learn from others is very necessary.”

Question 8.2: Did you participate in...

Multiple answer question

95 answers



Conclusions Module 8: Concluding Questions

The answers to question 8.1 “Do you wish for advanced training opportunities specifically for your teaching?” are clear: 45 % of the participants wish advanced training opportunities for their camera work but 76 % require advanced training opportunities for teaching methods. This is a confirmation to the result of question 7.5. Only 19 % of the participants don’t see a need for training at all.

The wish for improvement of the teaching methods comes together with the wish for more exchange with other teachers of cinematography. This is followed in the priority list by advanced training for new camera technologies. Last priority has advanced training for disruptive image technologies.

The answers to question 8.2 reveal that many participants in this survey also had taken part in other activities of the camera societies, especially of IMAGO: Nearly a third had taken part in the conference “Teaching Cinematography” 2017 at the HFF Munich, another third at other IMAGO conferences or masterclasses at CAMERIMAGE. Only 10 % had taken part in the inquiry “The Cinematographer and the Lens for Film and for Tele-

vision” of the authors of this survey in 2014. Also, only 12 % had taken part in CILECT conferences and another 12 % in the “Hands On” masterclass program at the HFF Munich. This is a remarkably low overlap. But cross-examination shows that there is a significant congruence between the positive answers: Nearly a third of the participants in this survey also had taken part in recent activities of different institutions. In contrast to this there are two-thirds who have not taken part in any activity mentioned. It is obvious that especially the last group has potential for future activities like conferences, masterclasses or training programs. Also, a closer collaboration of the cinematographers’ societies with CILECT, The International Association of Film and Television Schools, seems to be valuable, especially for the exchange about teaching methods.

Do you have final comments to this survey or to the topic Teaching Cinematography?

Open free text question

45 answers

With this question the participants in this survey shall have the final say. Here is a selection:

"Teaching is my passion."

"I am passionate about teaching cinematography. It was a daring decision which I never questioned since, trying to give my best on every single class."

"I believe cinematography must be taught from active cinematographers. Our subject is evolving very fast, and aesthetics moves faster, so that only working cinematographers can get it, because our work obligates us to be up to date."

"Thank You for this survey. It was interesting!"

"Good luck with the publication!"

"Some of the questions and possible responses don't seem to me to have fully captured the essence of teaching cinematography (some of it may be lost in translation). I would be interested in being involved in the development of future surveys if I could be of any use."

"Well done."

"Institutional accreditation should be the standard. In the UK we have the Creative Skillset accreditation, but this does not really mean anything. We need one for cinematography and postproduction."

"It is complicated to answer these questions clearly because the courses I teach change a lot. Sometimes I teach more, sometimes less. Sometimes I teach the cinematography students cinematography, sometimes directing students cinematography, sometimes cinematography students directing and sometimes the basics of film language to all the specialisations and all of the courses are very different."

"Teaching is not an exclusive topic of the institutions anymore. Students have all the world via internet to collect knowledge. But to be accompanied by a 'master' during your individual development is a big chance of a profound film school with enough budget like HFF Munich."

"Know-how about analog film shall remain an important part of teaching cinematography!!! As an alternative, 8, 16, 35, 65 mm should stay available!!!" (From German)

“this inquiry is strongly based on dealing with camera technology. but the profession of the cinematographer is more based on questions of arts, design and dramaturgy. the cooperation with the director is central, also the relation to the actors, the communication with the gaffer. the selection and the handling of the equipment are not vital for the professional career of a director of photography.” (From German)

“Recently I see the art of cinematography taught primarily as a technology, and not as a visual art. It should be ‘technology in the service of art’, not the other way around.”

“Teaching cinematography is a trade, about our job as filmmakers. I consider it a responsibility to transmit knowledge.”

“The reality is analog, the lenses are analog, the film is analog, the spectator is analog, the student is analog. The digital environment is only a representation.”

“Very interesting survey that let to think about how things are working.”

“Excellent effort by IMAGO! The future of film lies in its roots (its students) to blossom in the FUTURE!”

“Thank you for the initiation of this survey and there's future standardisation in teaching cinematography worldwide.”

“I was ‘lucky’ to have worked for a decade as camera assistant, an apprentice that is to my compatriots Yorgos Arvanitis, Aris Stavrou & Andreas Bellis, while being part of Ennio Guarnieri's camera team in Zeffirelli's Otello was certainly a highlight (Ennio's still active as a DoP and had a documentary on Marco Ferreri in competition at the latest (2017) Venice Film Festival, thirty years since I first met him (at 1986). Let's not forget that he was 1st AC (to legendary DoP Otello Martelli) in Fellini's Dolce Vita!!! Hopefully I'll be ‘there’ as well in thirty years to come! After that period, getting a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue post graduate studies in Cinematography at AFI, was essential in my whole approach both on an artistic and an educational level. My profs included Tom Denovi, Theo Van De Sande and the late Louis-Lajos Horvath, my mentor truly. Exactly a quarter of a century has passed since I received my MFA in cinematography: time has passed through TV series initially, to commercials, to documentaries, to short fiction films and eventually to features with an occasional stint at lighting-design for the stage (a parallel condition to many fellow-cinematographers in Greece), while those later years teaching cinematography, became almost my main occupation. I still watch films, enjoy reading books on filmmaking and most of all love to contemplate on lighting and visual possibilities. I am always fascinated by the narrative impact of choices on possible focal lengths and the unbelievable flow of information available. I ‘admit’ that I enjoy the digital era as well, after a life devoted to the finesse of negative film, a finesse not supported unfortunately by local labs (with few exceptions), who made fortunes without predicting the future. Of course the most enigmatic condition is certainly the absence of budget in almost all productions in terms of archival copies. It is agonizing and stressful

just to think of what will happen to all that material shot on tape & 'memory' cards... Hopefully this will change. Finally another stressful condition: the state budget for any University program has lowered by almost 70% over what is labeled as the 'crisis'-period, at least in my country. We are forced -us university professors- to think in terms of how to find financial support for the studies we offer. This is a new condition that I try to grasp and to adapt myself into. Cinema (still) relies on equipment, really sophisticated and of incredible value. However there is cynicism from most manufacturers who provide support mostly to what they consider 'industry'. I honestly believe, even more so during those 'troubled-times', that it is the industry itself that should support the education."

"It would be nice to get better information on when one can attend the events mentioned. Furthermore it's getting more and more difficult to get good film examples, as anti-piracy measures makes it difficult to get good high quality film clips."

"I am mostly a working cinematographer who does masterclasses and occasional lectures during the year when I am not working and am asked to participate. I am not really considered to be a teacher, more like a visiting lecturer."

"Teaching cinematography is an ever changing topic and it's good to meet and talk with other teachers."

"The questions in this questionnaire are very different from our teaching techniques; so basically our teaching methods differ very much from our teaching techniques."

"Teaching is incredible and allows you to have a greater awareness of your own work and how to carry it out."

"One of the difficult things with the classes is they often coincide with either my shoots or my teaching, so I seldom have the opportunity to attend."

"I would love to travel more to teach intensive workshops in cinematography."

"I think it is a very important topic. Over the years I have had some involvement in the organisation and delivery of teaching workshops within our branch of the Australian Cinematographers Society and the Australian Film & TV School, along with other, smaller organisations. I have always been keen to show students a real-world view of what it means to be a professional cinematographer, in all the many facets; technical, creative, psychological, collegiate and business."

"A new conference is needed for 2019. Cinematography Teaching Methodologies and Phd's with cinematography as a based topic."

Recapitulation of the Results

1. Working Conditions as a Cinematographer

125 participants from 40 states worldwide give a representative cross-section. Very positively many participants come from other continents than Europe, so a broad national distribution was reached. As a general result it turned out, that there were only very few national specialities.

70 % of the participants are a member of a national cinematographers' society. Another 28 % are a member of another professional society. This means a very high degree of professional organisation. But it has to be taken into account that the survey was announced and forwarded primarily via IMAGO and the national cinematographers' societies, so their members may be slightly over-represented. Nevertheless it may be assumed that cinematography teachers are as organised in professional societies as cinematographers. Hence, the cinematographers' societies have also a responsibility for teaching cinematography.

The main fields of activity as cinematographers are dominated by fictional and documentary feature films including commercials. Television productions, especially multi-camera, were fewer than average. This might again be caused by the way of announcing and forwarding it to the potential participants. On the other side this could represent reality in many film schools and universities that see feature film as the "supreme discipline" for cinematography. Clearly, this has a huge impact on teaching cinematography: It is seen primarily as an artistic topic, accompanied by craftsmanship, technological aspects, scientific aspects and others.

Question 1.4 about the camera types used for the productions has been criticized by a few participants as "too technical". But it had been asked in module 1 and module 3 on purpose to have an indicator about the kind of the productions and whether the technical circumstances are the same in teaching. By this there is an interesting cross-reference, especially for the use of 16mm and 35mm film stock. Most of the productions are shot with digital single sensor film cameras. (It will be no surprise, that it is nearly the same in teaching.) All other kinds of cameras are of lower importance, particularly TV broadcast and studio cameras. As a surprise, many cinematographers still shoot on photo chemical film, especially 35mm. (As will be seen in question 3.2 for teaching this amount is even higher.)

Another significant cross-reference: In our survey "The Cinematographer and the Lens for Film and Television" 2014, the participating cinematographers stated to use digital

single sensor film cameras for 68 % of their productions, 20 % broadcast three sensor cameras – and 7 % 35mm resp. 5 % 16mm film.³

2. Teaching Conditions

Many participants teach at different schools or other institutions in parallel in different time scales. The variety is expressed by the broad grey bars in the graph. It can be no surprise that most of the teaching of cinematography is done in State film schools. This is the standard model for academic film education in Europe. But they are not followed by the – rarer – private film schools but by States Universities. The reason is that in many countries outside Europe there are no film schools, the standard model for academic film education being film departments at Universities. Cinematography is also taught by institutions for vocational film and television training. The last group are Academies for fine arts or performing arts.

The contractual relationships show huge variety. Many participants teach as a professor and/or in a free contract. Many teach at different institutions in different contractual relationships. Many of the contracts are temporary. Honorary professorships are quite seldom.

3. Teaching Subjects

Most important for this question module was question 3.1: “Which topics do you teach?” The narrow bars in the chart showed a wide consensus about the commonly taught topics. Interestingly, first priority is not pictorial design but lighting. From the answers the following priorities of teaching subjects can be deduced:

Teaching subjects with high priority:

1. Lighting design
2. Artistic use of the lens
3. Picture composition for film- and TV-cameras
4. Operating cameras
5. Theory of the cinematography

Teaching subjects with medium priority:

6. Lighting technology
7. Technology of film- and TV-cameras
8. Technique of camera movement

³ Slansky, Peter C.; Richthofer, Katrin: *The Cinematographer and the Lens for Film and Television. An Inquiry*, Center for Advanced Studies of Film Technology of the University of Television and Film Munich, 2014

9. Technical background of lenses and optical imaging
10. General Picture Composition (fine arts, graphics, photography)
11. Working conditions and securing the future for freelance filmmakers

Teaching subjects with low priority:

12. Technology of signal processing and –recording including workflow-knowledge
13. Postproduction (editing, colour grading)
14. Sustainability @ cinematography
15. Visual Effects Composition
16. Visual Effects technology
17. Others

Please note, that this list is not complete as shown in question 3.6.

Question 3.2 “Which camera types did you use how often in your classes...?” has been criticized by some participants as “too technical”. But the answers are quite enlightening because they match very precisely with the answer profile of question 1.4 “Which camera types did you use how often in your films during the last three years?” Hence, the cinematographers use nearly the same camera types for their productions as for their lectures. There are two differences: Firstly, the amount of semi-professional and consumer single-sensor-cameras is higher in teaching than in the productions. Secondly, the amount of use of photochemical film is significantly higher in teaching than in the productions.

The fundamental technological change from photochemical film to digital signal processing, from shooting via postproduction to projection, has been carried out by all teachers of cinematography with only very rare exceptions. Nevertheless, today’s amount of photochemical film in teaching cinematography is astonishing: More than 40 % of the participants still use film stock in their lectures. Many of the others deeply regret that film or film labs are not available any more in their countries or cities. The reasons for the use of photochemical film in teaching can be read from the answers to question 3.5: 61 % of the participants make a clear statement for the future use of film in their teaching. 30 % declared that they use only digital cameras now, some of them regret it, some not. 9 % gave differing answers. Many of the supporters of film declared, that the use of photochemical film – by reasons of technique and price – educates the students to precision and accuracy. Very important for the teaching process is that, due to the lab process, the result is not available immediately. So, all the decisions on the set as positioning and movement of the camera, framing, focus, lighting, exposure, filtering and so on have to be made step by step. The “shortcoming” of the unavailability of the image on set turns out as an advantage for teaching. Another advantage of the use of film is the reduction and the concentration of the students on the optical basics of picture composition without getting lost in the possibilities and gadgets of digital camera menus. On the other side all cinematographers acknowledge the use of digital

cameras as today's reality. Only for teaching cinematography they see exceptions. As one participant wrote: "*[Film is] useful as a historical reference (like we learn Latin!)*".

Teaching cinematography for television is a subject of minor priority. This result can be seen from the minor use of broadcast cameras and semi-professional cameras with beam splitter. Just like in question 1.4, it has to be taken into account that TV-cinematographers had not been targeted by this inquiry as much as cinematographers for cinema, because IMAGO – as well as the national cinematographers' societies – rather address cinema instead of television. This preference is transferred to the teaching institutions to a considerable proportion. The film departments of Universities and the film schools mostly see themselves as art's schools and the majority of the cinematography teachers put the artistic approach on first priority. But as can be seen from the answers to question 3.1, the majority of the cinematography teachers also teach non-artistic subjects: technology, craftsmanship, image theory and so on.

Very interesting are the answers to question 3.6: From all new image technologies, color grading has had the strongest influence on teaching cinematography. VFX and previsualizing are following. New technologies for the movement of the camera like mini cams, sliders, gimbals and copters have medium influence. Only small influence comes from "disruptive" image technologies like 360°-film, virtual reality, augmented reality and – taking the last place – games.

Different conclusions are possible: It seems that teaching cinematography (mainly for films for cinema) is a remarkably stable – or "conservative" – field of activity. Technology has changed and is still changing, but the basics of framing, camera movement, lighting etc. are still the same. The huge impact of digital color grading is no contradiction to this. The cinematographers had to react to the challenge and had to integrate color grading into their work as well as into their teaching to maintain their authorship of the image. On the other side, the "general convergence of the media", as it was proposed very often since years, did not take place – at least not in the creative work and the teaching of the participants of this inquiry.

Sustainable cinematography represents a special topic area (questions 3.7 and 3.8). On the one hand most of the cinematographers are aware of its significance. On the other hand in general they have little experience with it. Hence, advanced training – for the job as well as for teaching – is stated to be important. For the future we can expect a growing demand. We can also expect, that the aspects of sustainability encroach upon other fields of cinematography, especially lighting that is responsible for a huge amount of energy consumption on a film set. And lighting has top priority for cinematographers as a teaching subject. So, we can expect new changes in cinematography as well as in teaching cinematography for the near future.

Most of the cinematographers who took part in this survey teach a bouquet of different subjects related to cinematography, largely with a combination of theory and practice.

Only few cinematographers confine themselves to only one aspect of cinematography, most of them combine different artistic subjects that are essential for the creation of moving images. Teaching subjects with a low orientation for application have a low priority. The basics of lighting technology, camera technology and lens technology are taught as subsidiary subjects. The interconnection with transcendent subjects as 360°-film, virtual reality, augmented reality and games is small: “Cinematography” still means the rectangular upright standing moving image, on a canvas or a display.

4. Teaching Methods

Many participants answered to question 4.1 that they decided on their teaching subjects and methods in collaboration with representatives or other teachers of the school. In one third of the cases a firm commitment between the teacher and the teaching institution is made before the beginning of the lecture or workshops. Beyond that there is a wide variety of formal and informal arrangements about the teaching subjects and methods including stable long term engagements.

In the answers to question 4.2 the participants stated the amount of time they spend on preparation and follow-up of their lectures in working days per year. The numbers are remarkably high. Half of all participants work between 11 and 40 days per year for the preparation and the follow-up of their lectures. Cinematographers with a fixed professorship work an average 50 days per year for the preparation and the follow-up, some of them up to 200 days per year. These numbers can be explained with the extraordinary need of technical equipment – cameras, lenses, lighting, dolly, grip – and for technically high equipped rooms – studios, cinemas, editing or color grading suites – for teaching cinematography. The high amount of technisation of teaching demands a similar amount of organization. This can be delegated only to some extent. It is fair to say that from all academic disciplines, cinematography has one of the highest amounts of preparatory and following activities directly linked to teaching.

This result has to be seen in the context of question 4.3: Only in 30 % of all cases the time for preparatory work and follow-up is paid completely. In more than half of the cases, the teachers are not paid for this work at all. Full payment is mostly given to teachers with a fixed contract or professorship, no payment is common for visiting lecturers or teachers with a free contract. In many countries State Universities and film schools are bound to strict legal regulations that allow payment for effective teaching time only and prohibit payment for preparation and follow-up. This creates a huge gap of (in-) justice for many teachers of cinematography.

It cannot come as a surprise that practical workshops in a studio are the most common-place form of teaching cinematography (question 4.4). Interestingly, lectures in a seminar room outweigh film screenings in a cinema or screening room. This may have one reason in the lower availability of cinemas or screening rooms compared to seminar

rooms. But it can also be taken as a sign that cinematography is not completely dominated by practical training and that theoretical studies come into their own.

The answers to question 4.4 show a wide consensus between the participants. Bigger variations come for question 4.5 about the sizes of the learning group. This is not a big surprise because smaller groups of students result in higher costs for the teaching institution. The participants stated average group sizes of 12 to 25 students for practical workshops at Universities. For film schools a wide majority stated 6 to 12 students per group. There were no significant national variations for this. We can conclude that a group size between 6 and 12 students has been established as an optimum for practical workshops and lectures with technical equipment. The schools and the teachers have to deal with the high amount of technization and organization and the small group sizes to achieve a high quality of teaching, even shareholder value driven institutions.

The answers to question 4.6 show that there is a wide consensus about the teaching materials for cinematography: Nearly all participants prepare their own scripts and presentations. This is also one reason for the huge amount of preparatory work. Only a minority of the participants uses self-written articles for journals or books in their teaching – as a kind of a double outcome of the preparatory work. Widely in use is professional literature. Interestingly, the majority of the teachers do not use image examples from their own films or photography, but mostly from other cinematographers/photographers.

In question 4.7 “How do you teach your practical classes?” the answers could only be picked from a list of very concrete examples on purpose. The result shows medium standard deviations. Most cinematography teachers let their students recreate scenes from films, photographs or paintings. The examples from third-parties work overweigh the examples from one’s own work. Interestingly, photos and paintings are nearly as often in use as templates as film scenes. A wide consensus is about teaching cinematography students together with directing students. Also very common are technical camera and lens tests. Teaching cinematography for fictional films overweigh teaching for documentary films. When the students are shooting in a documentary way, most of the time they are not supervised by the teachers. Very often the color grading is done by the students. As in question 3.6 this is expressed by a small standard deviation: Again, we see that color grading is very important for teaching cinematography.

The equipment for teaching is mostly property of the school as the answers to questions 4.8 show. As the teachers had stated to question 3.2, nearly the same cameras are used for teaching as for production. This means that the schools have to spend a lot of money on their equipment pools to keep them up to date. Less common is that the equipment for teaching is rented or is given by companies for free. Sometimes even the cinematography teachers bring their own equipment with them, mostly for free. This is another evidence for the high intrinsic motivation of the cinematographers (who participated in this survey) for teaching.

70 % of all participants also conduct examinations, with a majority of practical ones. In two-thirds of these cases the exams are obligatory, only in a fourth part they are tentative. In a fifth part only after passing the practical exam the students are allowed to use the respective equipment. In light of the fact that cinematography is mainly seen as an artistic teaching issue, the exam procedures seem to be quite strict. In the following question module we will see that cinematographers educate not only cinematography students but also students from many other disciplines. According to this, cinematography turns out to be a kind of “hard” topic inside film studies. This is expected to be even more the case, when technical aspects have a wider scope in teaching cinematography.

5. Students

The answers to question 5.1 reveal that cinematography is a central subject for many – if not for all – film studies. In more than 50 % of all cases cinematographers educate directing students as well, in more than 33 % of all cases production students, editing students and script writing students, too. For many more film disciplines, cinematography is a fundamental element to study. So, teaching cinematography means a high responsibility for the teacher not only for his or her own profession but for all aspects of film and television education. This has to be taken into account in question module 6: In most cases cinematographers are called to teaching because of their creative work. By this they serve as a kind of “anchor”, a professional counterweight, opposed to potential tendencies of theorization and academization of film studies.

According to the answers to question 5.2, the most common degrees for cinematography are bachelor (57 %) and master (46 %). (Please keep in mind that the percentage numbers don't add up to 100 because many teachers teach at more than one institution.) But the amount of full time diploma degrees (36 %) and postgraduate diploma degree (14 %) is remarkably high. And the majority of the diploma degrees were stated by participants from Europe. This is quite surprising because the Bologna-process from classic diplomas to the bachelor/master system had first political priority in Europe. But cross-examination with question 2.1 reveals that many film schools in Europe successfully escaped from the Bologna-process. Even 19 years after its beginning they have obviously good reason to stand firm: Fulltime studies with a diploma degree in the end seem to have remarkable advantages compared to a two-step system.

Apart from an academic framework cinematographers are also teaching as postgraduate trainers (21 %) or vocational educators (12 %). So, they not only have to interact with students, but also with professionals or trainees with differences not only in previous knowledge, but also in learning style and motivation. Hence, the cinematographers have to develop – respectively they have developed – special teaching skills.

In 67 % of the cases, the teachers receive a documented feedback to their lectures by the teaching institution, in another 21 % an oral one. So, today a formal evaluation procedure seems to be a permanent feature of teaching cinematography. But on the other hand there are 39 % of the participants who stated that they had to “collect” their feedback directly from their students. (Again: the numbers don’t add up to 100 %.) In this question neither national nor institutional differences could be found.

6. Personal Relation to Teaching

The questions of module 6 were designed to target the individual biographies of the participants and the interconnection between their creative work and their teaching. A wide majority of 75 % answered to question 6.1 “How did you start your teaching?” “I have been asked by a representative of a University/a provider because of my camera work.” This is a central result of this survey: In a specific moment in time, a cinematographer is “called” to teaching. The initial point for the call is his or her creative work up to that moment in time. The call can come (or end) as a “calling” for a professorship.

From the answers to question 6.2 the individual teaching experience was calculated and put into categories. The result was a three-thirds distribution: One third of the participants had a teaching experience of up to 10 years, another third of more than 10 to 20 years and the last third had a teaching experience of more than 20 years. The authors of this survey want to congratulate two participants for their teaching experience of 50 years: one from Belgium and the other from the US: Congratulations! And all the best further on!

As a surprise, in many questions of this survey there were no significant systematical differences in the answers between these groups. This means on one hand that also the “long-term” cinematography teachers have adopted to the fundamental shift from analog to digital technology – in their creative work as well as in their teaching. On the other hand cinematography also seems to deal with „eternal questions“ that have to be answered anew in each era. A participant put it like this: *“Technology took an enormous leap forward in the last 30 years but cinematography in the principle is still the same.”*

More than 60 % of the participants answered question 6.3 “How did you develop your teaching methods?” with “At the beginning I developed my teaching entirely from my practical work and later have developed an own teaching methodology.” A quarter stated that they had developed their own teaching method right from the beginning. In free text answers 16 % of the participants wrote that they had finished a pedagogical degree or pedagogical courses. This has to be remembered when coming to question 7.5: “If you could start again today: What would you do differently with your entry into teaching?” Many participants wrote that they wished that they would have more didactic knowledge, for example via a pedagogical degree or training.

Altogether the answers to question module 6 reveal a pattern how cinematographers are called to teaching and how they develop their teaching. This shall be deepened and individualized in the follow question module, as a point of culmination of this survey. But we must not forget that this survey is only about those cinematographers who are still teaching, not about those who quitted after a short or a longer time – for whatever reasons.

7. Tell us Your Story!

“How was your very first course?” A quarter of the participants wrote that their first course went quite well. The eleventh part wrote that there were no special incidents. A third of the participants wrote that they had been very excited and nervous. Another quarter remembered that they made serious methodological mistakes in their first lecture. The last two groups together are 58 %, the majority of the participants. Only six participants wrote that they couldn’t remember this event at all. In the contrary, 92 % of the participants have a precise memory about their teaching debut. For a majority this debut as a teacher is associated with a bundle of highly emotional, sometimes contradicting, personal experiences. These experiences base on their personal uncertainty in a new role model and the struggle to transfer their competence in cinematography into teaching cinematography. Here is a striking citation: *“Stepping from behind the camera to the front was quite a big step.”*

This is also revealed by a cross-check with question 7.5. The challenge of transforming one’s own competence in cinematography onto teaching is an adventure that has to be told like a hero’s journey. This is the dominating narrative. Its domination is explained by the fact that here only the “survivors” – those who are still teaching – were asked to tell their story. The stories of the others – those who gave up after their first attempts, those who gave up after a longer period of teaching, those who never agreed to a call for teaching and those who were never asked to give a lesson – are not told here (although their stories might be touching enough to be told as well).

“What was your best experience in one of your courses?” Most of the answers to this question are about positive learning moments, often described as “Eureka-events”, or about positive feedback from the students. Inspiration “back” onto the own creative work also belongs to the positive outcomes of teaching cinematography. By this the circle becomes complete: After all, it was their creative work why they were called for teaching.

„What was the biggest disaster in one of your courses?” This question is a mirror of the former question. (Only) less than a fifth of the participants wrote that they did not face a real disaster in their teaching (yet). Another fifth wrote that they saw the reason for their biggest teaching disaster in their own mistakes, mainly in bad preparation (a time investment that in many cases is not paid...). More than 40 % of the participants stated

that their biggest disaster in teaching goes back to one or more of their students or course participants. The more conciliatory narratives are about positive feedback being missed. The more dramatic narratives are about explicitly negative teaching experiences caused by single inappropriate behavior of students or wrecked group interaction. They are taken very seriously because the learning group is widely associated with the film team – another result of self-taught teaching methods. 12 % of the participants quote technical problems as a reason for their biggest teaching disaster, another 12 % write about other reasons outside of their responsibility. Altogether, the reasons for teaching disasters are mainly about wrecked socio-technical interaction between teachers and learners as well as between learners among themselves.

„Which of your own examples of teaching worked especially well?“ This question evoked a wide variety of concrete descriptions covering the full range of topics and methods of teaching cinematography. They can be seen as a collection of best practice examples. But a cross-check with question 3.2 comes as a surprise: “Lighting” had been stated to be the most important teaching subject – here it plays a minor part, most of the examples are about simulating the work of a film crew on the set.

“If you could start again today: What would you do differently with your entry into teaching?“ 45 % – nearly every second – described concrete approaches. Another 22 % stated that they would like to develop their didactic methods more systematically. On the other side 33 % stated that they did neither see a reason nor a possibility to do anything differently. In other words: Two-thirds of the participants would have done several things differently if they could start teaching again today. This is another indicator for their ability to self-criticism. It also reflects the wide-spread autodidact approach of their teaching.

More than half of the participants in question module 7 wanted to give their statements by name. This displays the awareness of authorship among the cinematographers, which is no surprise.

8. Concluding Questions

The answers to question 8.1 “Do you wish for advanced training opportunities specifically for your teaching?“ are clear: 45 % of the participants wish for advanced training opportunities for their camera work, 76 % want advanced training opportunities for teaching methods. This is a confirmation to the result of question 7.5. Only 19 % of the participants don’t see a need for training at all.

The wish for improvement of the teaching methods comes together with the wish for more exchange with other teachers of cinematography. This is followed in the priority list by advanced training for new camera technologies. Last priority has advanced training for disruptive image technologies.

The answers to question 8.2 reveal that many participants in this survey also had taken part in other activities of the camera societies, especially of IMAGO: Nearly a third had taken part in the conference “Teaching Cinematography” 2017 at the HFF Munich, another third at other IMAGO conferences or masterclasses at CAMERIMAGE. Only 10 % had taken part in the inquiry “The Cinematographer and the Lens for Film and Television” of the authors of this survey in 2014. Also, only 12 % had taken part in CILECT conferences and another 12 % in the “Hands On” masterclass program at the HFF Munich. This is a remarkably low overlap. But cross-examination shows that there is a significant congruence between the positive answers: Nearly a third of the participants in this survey also had taken part in recent activities of different institutions. In contrast to this there are two-thirds who have not taken part in any activity mentioned. It is obvious that especially the last group has potential for future activities like conferences, masterclasses or training programs. Also, a closer collaboration of the cinematographers’ societies with CILECT, The International Association of Film and Television Schools, seems to be valuable, especially for the exchange about teaching methods.

Outlook

This survey can't be more than a cross-section in a snapshot style. In the end, there are new questions about teaching cinematography that have to be answered in the future.

How can the methods of teaching cinematography, mostly self-taught by the cinematographers, be improved systematically? What part can the camera societies – national ones or international ones like IMAGO – play in this process?

What part does Television – and all the other related media – play in teaching cinematography?

How do we deal with the huge imbalance between male and female cinematographers and cinematography teachers?

What kind of influence shall new media and new media technologies beyond the upright rectangular canvas or display have on teaching cinematography? Shall the technical aspects be taught separately from the artistic aspects?

Is there a counterpart to teaching cinematography as a science of cinematography? If so, what are the interconnections with creative camera work as well as with teaching?

Is there a need – at least a possibility – for „artistical science“ in cinematography? If so, which institutions shall deal with it? And if so, does this mean a need for higher academic degrees like a PhD for cinematography teachers?

Further examination seems to be valuable – if not necessary...

This report can be downloaded in a German and an English version from the website of the Center of Advanced Studies of Film Technology.

Further questions, comments, critique or compliments can be sent to sft@hff-muc.de.

Peter C. Slansky/Katrin Richthofer, Munich, 16.8.2018

Appendix

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1992 – 1995 Postgraduate Studies of Film/Television at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne

1992 – 1999 Freelancer Lecturer for Cinematography Camera Technology and Editing

1996 – 1998 Visiting Lecturer at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, Department Media Arts/Film

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Since 1999 Executive Professor for Film and Television Technology at the University of Television and Film (HFF) Munich

1999 – 2014 Executive Coordinator for the new Building of the University of Television and Film Munich in the center of the Munich Arts Quarter

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1994 – 1995 Postgraduate studies “Directing” at the Northern School for Film and Television, Leeds/UK

Since 1997 Freelance director and cinematographer (BR, ZDF, Pro Sieben, SWR, SRF)

Since 1998 Visiting Lecturer at the HFF Munich, Dept. II Technology and Dept. IV Documentary Film and Television Journalism, and the Technical University of Munich

1997 – 2006 Contract teacher at the camera department of the HFF Munich

Since 2007 Manager of the Center for Advanced Studies of Film Technology of the HFF

Since 2017 Conference and Training Program of IMAGO

Index of Societies

American Society of Cinematographers ASC
American Association of University Professors AAUP
Australian Cinematographers Society ACS
Austrian Association of Cinematographers AAC
Belgian Society of Cinematographers SBC
Brazilian Society of Cinematographers ABC
British Academy of Film and Television Arts BAFTA
British Guild of Television Camera Professionals GTC
British Society of Cinematographers BSC
Canadian Society of Cinematographers CSC
Chilean Society of Cinematographers ACC
Colombian Society of Cinematographers ADFC
Croatian Cinematographers Society HFS
Danish Association of Cinematographers DFF
Estonian Society of Cinematographers ESC
Fernseh- und Kinotechnische Gesellschaft FKTG
Finnish Society of Cinematographers FSC
French Society of Cinematographers AFC
German Film Academy DFA
German Society of Cinematographers BVK
Greek Society of Cinematographers GSC
Hungarian Society of Cinematographers HSC
Indian Society of Cinematographers ISC
Irish Society of Cinematographers ISC

Teaching Cinematography – An International Inquiry among Cinematographers

Israel Association of Cinema & Television Professionals ACT

Italian Society of Cinematographers AIC

Japanese Society of Cinematographers JSC

Latvian Guild of Cinematographers LGC

Malaysian Society of Cinematographers MySC

Mexican Society of Cinematographers AMC

Netherlands Society of Cinematographers NSC

Portuguese Society of Cinematographers AIP

Romanian Society of Cinematographers RSC

Russian Guild of Cinematographers RGC

Serbian Society of Cinematographers, SAS

Slovene Association of Cinematographers ZFS

Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers SMPTE

Spanish Society of Cinematographers AEC

Swedish Society of Cinematographers FSF

Swiss Cinematographers Society SCS

Turkish Society of Cinematographers TSC

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Munich, August 2018

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