

Entrepreneurial Study Cases using animation as an emotional learning tool for film production and entrepreneurs.

Introduction

Animation is a communication media and artistic expression which can foster emotional intelligence and creativity within different fields, besides the film industry and the entrepreneurial world. Such a concept, animation as an emotional learning tool, is presented and developed within the international module Creative learning and Animation (Erasmus semester) at VIA University College in collaboration with The Animation Workshop.

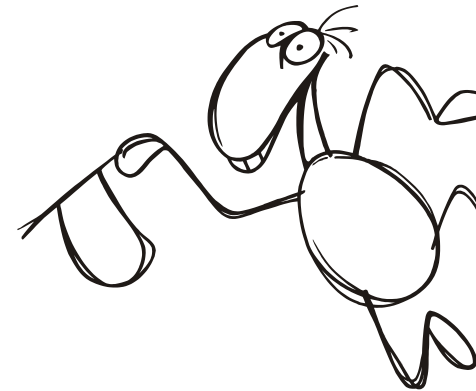
The semester takes place at VIA college during five months, twice a year, hosting students from all over the world, creating an international environment with social challenges for the students and teachers. VIA University College and the Animation Workshop count on several years of experience educating students as professionals and entrepreneurs for the film industry, the educational system and other fields where animation or film making may be applied to the curricula as a subject or part of one. Social skills and creativity are crucial for personal development and growth, in parallel with the technical aspects taught to work within the film industry.

Towards the end of this particular semester, as part of the curricula, students face two challenges, a big opportunity to apply their knowledge about animation techniques until that moment, as well as pedagogic approaches, working in teams and accomplishing a task given by a local company. A visual presentation is provided at the end of the challenge/job as a product to be used by the company/studio, under his policy and copy rights in previous agreement with the college's policy.

The challenges may change year to year depending on the companies contacted and agreements obtained.

On this paper we present two study cases corresponding to the semester Fall 2015:

1. Food maker. A video promo for the website of a local danish company.
2. Refugee's stories. An animated movie is made based on young refugees' stories from a local high school.



THE ANIMATION WORKSHOP

CENTER FOR ANIMATION AND VISUALISATION

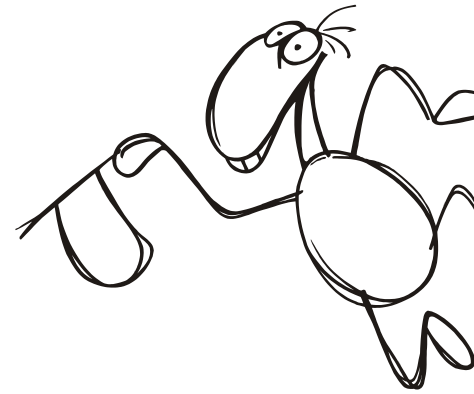
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Both challenges required the use of animation and storytelling to visualize ideas and perspectives, by following guidelines provided by the client. We work different target groups and goals, but over all, the creative process remains the main focus to obtain on one hand: a physical final product which addresses the company's objective; and on the other hand, the personal outcome from the experiences of the participants of the project.



1. Food Maker study case

Introduction

Food maker is a young company based in Arhus (Denmark) with an ambitious project to encourage people to organize meetings and learn how to cook. It's a social event to gather people from all ages and backgrounds to exchange recipes and learn how to eat healthy. The initiative was created a year ago and aim to expand all over the country with the desire to become a national social movement.

They provide a website <http://foodmaker.dk/> as a portal to promote the meetings offering information to make them happen. There is a group of directors to control the website and marketing, including some economical support and practical advice in order to structure the events. These take place from time to time at different locations, depending on the organizers' choice.

They organize the activity by splitting the tasks in four profiles of participants: the big brain (director), the raw power (production assistants), the looper (people in charge of the continuity of the event) and the sweet talker (the ones who help to disseminate the information). Food Maker wanted to promote through animated clips these four profiles and the company to inform and attract new participants.

The main slogan of the company is having fun by cooking, playing with food, learning by playing, which suits perfectly with animation as an attractive media, diverse and very entertaining, especially to engage with young audiences.



The company and college agreed Food Maker would pick the best movies and use them at their website and social media.

Methology

The goal of is to make and deliver an animated movie in two weeks.

length of film- 30 sec minimum- over one minute is recommended.

Music- free choice, and use of free sources.

Animation technique- mix of media, pixelation, cut out, hand drawing or clay animation.

Target group- all audiences, especially youngsters (15-30).

Material/software- pc, cameras, paper, plasticine, color pencil, watercolors, Stop motion Pro, Adobe premier, Adobe photoshop, Sony Vegas.

The directors of Food Maker have a meeting with the students and teachers in their classroom to discuss and present the project. Contact information is provided for further assistance or future doubts during the process.

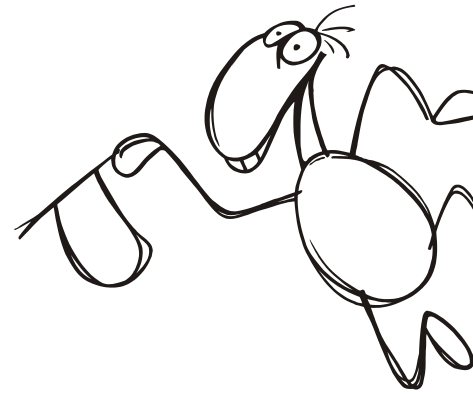
Food Maker provided with a series of guidelines for the students with the description of the company : story about who they are, logos, website, contact information and references for possible designs; together with the four profiles. Students have to work in teams and chose either to make an animation to promote the company or the four type of participants.

Theres freedom to chose animation technique, music and the length of the movie.



Students pitching their movie to Food maker team

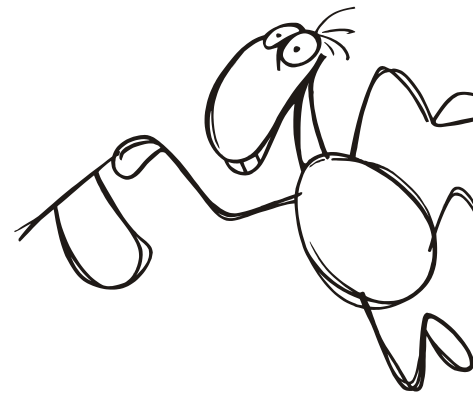
The class of 17 students is divided in small teams of 3 and 4 members, as they please, in order to work peacefully and have fun during the experience. At this point students have already had previous experiences working together which allowed them to get to know each other and their compatibility to work together.



Animation teachers acted as guides during the creative process allowing free decision making to the pupils. In this way students learn to be professional and take responsibility for their choices, gain confidence to distribute tasks, respect deadlines and be ready to receive external critiques.

The creative process is divided in three stages of: preproduction, production and postproduction.

At the end of the activity students pitched their idea in a formal presentation where they showed the final movie to Food Maker directors. These gave a constructive critique to each team in order to improve the movies for their use.



Results



The movies were finished in time with great success. Different quality levels were observed among all productions, reason why Food Maker decided different uses for each movie.

The company was very pleased with the results and the dynamic of the groups. Most of movies are currently in use (see link below, last view 30/12/2015)

<http://foodmaker.dk/1375-2/>

Each group felt proud of the final result showing a personal growth in social skills, communication, work under pressure, assertive discussions and facing challenges with different techniques.

The big reward to work on something real with a company raised the interest and potential of students involved in the activity. They see their work useful out in the world, that is a big validation to reinforce and rehearsal future situations in work environments, productions and project management. Even for those who would like to be entrepreneurs themselves and start their own companies or projects.

After this experience they got to know the whole process of a real production with its limitations and problems solving within team work and technical issues to face from scratch until the final render.





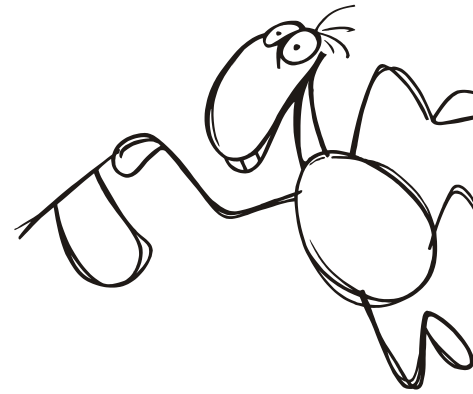
Discussion

In order to improve the experience and results it's recommended to ensure students have what they need to address the companies' product regarding to material and information.

The company must be clear from the beginning with the description of the project, what is expected from students, as well as with the technical aspects of the movies (formats, music rights, aspect ratio and so on), either if students are professional animators, film makers or not.

It's very positive to watch and do a follow up of the movies before they are finished. Invite guest professionals as advisors during the creative process and in a final evaluation must be considered.

Over all, these activities must be increased during the courses no matter their length, trying to contact companies and studios to invite them to college and vice versa. Set visits where students can see the routine of a regular day in studios or productions. It's extremely important to start true relationships where pupils see the connection between what they are learning in college with the real demands from the market. Furthermore, studios must talk with colleges and educators to keep any curricula up date, always connected to real experiences. There must be a flow that comes and goes from the inside-out academic world, which is as well, a business company itself.



**VIBORG
UNGDOMSSKOLE**

2. Refuge's study case



Animation students with refugees at Ungdomsskole



The Animation Workshop
VIA University College



Introduction

Due to extreme circumstances, war or poverty, many citizens are forced to leave their mother land. In times where economic crisis affects the whole entire world, we face resistance and racism from the most extreme mind sets. From our educative philosophy using filmmaking and the pedagogics hand to hand , we try to foster compassion and emotional intelligence to think, feel and act with kindness and wisdom. Everybody lives a different story, but same feelings, dreams, fears and hopes.

This has been a great study case and opportunity to meet other kind of students who didn't decide to leave their country and families just to get an exciting experience. At Viborg Ungdomsskole, there are many refugees who arrived from different countries, circumstances and social backgrounds with the hope of a new start. At first, they are placed for a period of time in integration classes, where they learn the official language and danish culture, as others from their fellows. It's a time of adaptation and it varies from person to person and his learning process to pass to another class of different level. Although there is an estimate frame time to keep the learning flow.

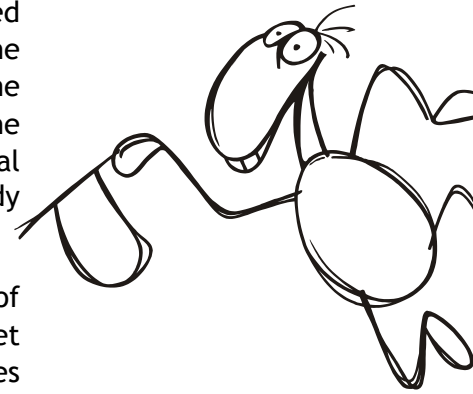
Some of these students didn't even speak English, for what they have translators supporting them during the classes. This is a language barrier which makes difficult the learning and teaching. Some teachers started to use more visual material such a movies and animated clips to capture their attention and enhance the communication as wel as the classes.

The school contacted us to make some movies based on the stories of these youngsters, formers of a class of 10-12 students from 15 til 20 years old. They wanted to develop an activity which could bring students together by learning and playing. Animation within this context faces the challenge to go through language barrier and be able to communicate not just thoughts, but feelings in a very sensitive situation.

For its power as visual metaphor, animation works very well in such a situation by providing enough tools to express emotions and tell stories, even when words are hard to say or students don't feel comfortable to speak loud.

The goal was to give them a voice and tell their story, as our students had to visualize and decide what kind of story and how they could tell it,in such a way that the message of being human, over all, prevails despite of what make us different. Dreams and happy memories were the main themes to work on.

The challenge ended up in a big screening of the movies and their use in the integration classes and website of the school as real testimonies.



Methology

The goal of is to make and deliver an animated movie in two weeks.

length of film- one minute is recommended.

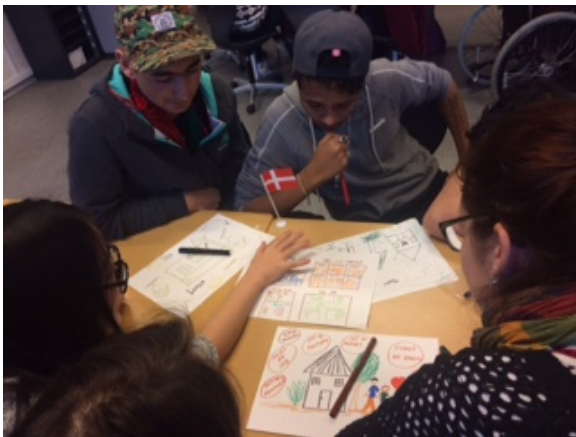
Music- free choice, use of free sources.

Animation technique- mix of media, pixelation, cut out, hand drawing or clay animation.

Target group- all audiences, especially youngsters (15-30).

Material/software- pc, cameras, paper, plasticine, color pencil, watercolors, Stop motion Pro, Adobe premier, Adobe photoshop, Sony Vegas.

The school set up several meetings between the animators and the refugees to get to know each other. During these meetings the



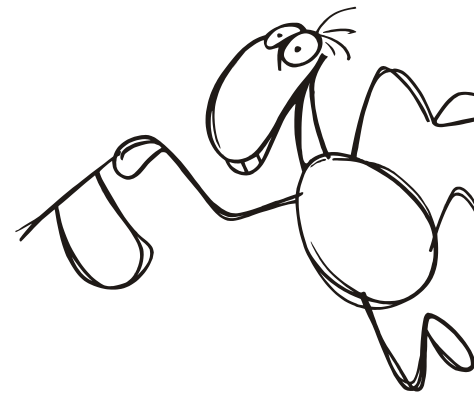
Students and animators discussing their stories.

animators prepared several activities, such as games and interviews to get familiar with the refugees and feel comfortable in order to start gradually a dialog. They created a trust environment with the teachers, from both sides, supervising the whole process.

Animators showed some previous work to the refugees to make them understand clearer what they do and wanted to do with their stories. Some animated movies related to war and persecution, from the Film Board of Canada, were shown to the class to sensitize and create a debate to talk about these issues.

There were 5 groups in total working together with one, two or three refugees respectively. Each team focused on one theme preparing a production pipeline to control the time, the activities to collect personal data, and brainstorm together about the type of story they would like to do. After collecting enough data, they draw the storyboard before jumping into production.

Some of the refugees worked on the production stage by using personal photos, recording their voices and even drawing and animating some scenes by themselves.



The main animation techniques used were cut out and hand drawing for their sensibility and aesthetic. External support, like translators and supervisors, was always provided. Animators shared their stories and experiences with the young students, obtaining a very different perspective from preconceived ideas and prejudices.

All groups worked from different angles: working personal emotions, relationships, family environment, the journey to an unknown country and dreams after their arrival to Denmark. The groups enjoyed more about learning different cultures, living situations, and traumas through games and making the movies. They realized they shared more in common despite of their origin.

The project was followed at every step by the teachers, giving constructive critiques, technical advices and triggering questions to push further those whose potential could reach better results.

The creative process had the three main stages of any animated film: preproduction, production and postproduction. The music was taken into account basically from the very beginning to inspire the team and be more in control of the movie and time.

Results

The experience was very rich for both sides, despite of some resistance from a few animators who wanted to work on their personal story rather than a refugee's one.

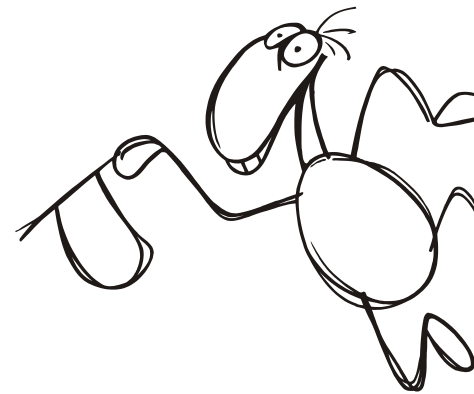
The use of pedagogic games helped the animators to bond with the refugees enhancing compassion, resilience and tolerance .



A refugee drawing and animating one scene with an animator.

They learn to listen and question cultural beliefs, religion and personal tabus, talking and discussing in a assertive manner. We see a strong use of animation to reflect on actions, thoughts and feelings.

Confidence and team work improved to resolve problems and help each other. In this specific case we appreciated the strength of animation as an affective communication tool to express very deep feelings and talk without words through the movement, colors, and mimic when they didn't want to speak.

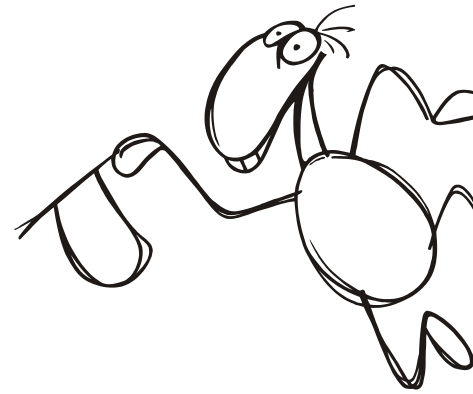


Either animators as the refugees become more open minded, they loved the experience to be able to do something meaningful and useful for the community and themselves.

A screening was organized at the main theater of Ungdomsskole to show all movies. The experience was very rewarding, a more relax and fraternal environment full of laughs and illusions to see themselves, their stories on the big screen.

Discussion

Animation is an excellent media to work especially sensitive matters as this case. As a visual game and the practice itself of animating and being part of the creative process, helps the participants to feel useful, fulfilled and happier. It should be considered within art therapy and regular schools for a creative and emotional learning since our brains and as human beings learn and teach using stories.



Final screening at Ungdomsskole.

