Handbook

with guidelines for challenge based FILMEU pedagogical approach

WP 2 Institutional and Staff Capacitation
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INTRODUCTION

FilmEU, The European University for Film and Media Arts, is an alliance of four European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Lusófona University of Humanities and Technology, Lisbon, Portugal (ULHT)
- LUCA School of Arts from Brussels, Belgium (LUCA)
- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology, Dublin, Ireland (IADT)
- University of Theatre and Film Arts, Budapest, Hungary (SZFE)

Our mission is to create a European University that functions as a model of collaboration and innovation in the multidisciplinary fields of film and media arts and that significantly contributes to Europe's leading role as a provider of education and research in the creative and artistic sector. We aim to promote the relevance of culture and aesthetic values to societal wellbeing and contribute to the ongoing structural, economic, and material reconfigurations of the cultural and creative industries.

About this handbook

The FilmEU Pedagogical Handbook formally introduces **Samsara**, a challenge-based pedagogical framework devised to support our mission to foster excellence in film and media arts higher education. This framework is a pragmatic response to the need to transform teaching and learning practices within the context of rapidly changing social and technological conditions which affect the creation, production, distribution, and reception of audio-visual culture, industries, research, and education.

The handbook:

- describes the principles, theories, methodologies, and teaching approaches that will guide us (Pedagogical Guidelines)
- defines the goals Samsara hopes to achieve as well as the theoretical and historical context of its genesis (Samsara Pedagogical Framework)
- provides guidelines and teaching strategies to implement Samsara and Challenge Based Learning, including the FilmEU Annual Challenge and a description of the 2021/22 Challenge Pilot (Implementation Guidelines)

Using the handbook

The Samsara framework presented in this Handbook is primarily aimed at guiding practices in teaching and curriculum design but is also relevant to other areas of educational intervention including admissions, assessments, research, professional development, staff capacitation, student affairs, and quality assurance.

For teachers

Different teaching and cultural backgrounds and experiences lead to a diversity of attitudes when facing a new project or pedagogical paradigm. We want all teachers to feel a part of this project, and we recognise that the flexibility and motivation required to adapt to new curricula and methods must be perceived by teachers as an added value to their work and career. That these methods promote and support clear improvement in teacher and student performance, and that good work will be recognized by our institutions, is essential to ensure durable change and enthusiastic participation. A motivated ensemble of good and trained teachers is key to the success of this great project. As such, we are working diligently to design and provide training, support, and resources for teachers in implementing the Samsara framework.

Teacher involvement at every stage of development is also important and is why we have strived from the outset to collaborate and ensure participation from teachers. This collaborative effort has already accomplished something amazing: the creation of the Samsara framework. The continued contribution from all teachers toward improving it is equally essential.

Many of the principles and methodologies Samsara advocates are already being used by many teachers and are well underway in many of our partner institutions. In fact, the work presented here is in great part inspired by these existing practices. What's new, perhaps, is the desire to share and learn deeply from each other, to work together as an Alliance to internationalise and improve our methods, to test and refine them, to stimulate innovation and push our field forward, and to do so in a way that embraces flexibility, values creativity, and promotes the FilmEU mission and our core principles. Samsara is not a static, top-down initiative but rather one that will continually unfold and blossom and evolve with each collaborative FilmEU undertaking.

Development methodology

FilmEU's pedagogical framework was developed following our "Six I's" iterative project development methodology through six stages: information, investigation, ideation, implementation, incubation, and incrementation.

In this schema, our first task was to gather **information** about best practices in the field and to undertake an **investigation** of practices in our own institutions. Next, we evaluated and analysed this information to identify challenges and goals. The **ideation** stage involved devising viable solutions for a FilmEU pedagogical framework; the Samsara framework presented in this document represents the culmination of this stage. We have just begun the **implementation** stage, in which we are piloting and testing the framework. Furthermore, massive open online courses (MOOCs) and Lifelong learning (LLL) courses are currently being designed to support staff in training and professional development.

The stage following implementation is **incubation** during which time we will establish conditions for Samsara to thrive via extensive teacher training, staff capacitation, dissemination activities, events, and conferences. The final stage, **incrementation,** corresponds to the development of permanent process for improving and supporting Samsara after the funding period has ended.

As the FilmEU project grows and develops and as new knowledge is acquired, Samsara and this Handbook will be iterated and improved.

Figure - Six I's Methodology

PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES

CORE PRINCIPLES

FilmEU is comprised by a consortium of universities from across Europe and includes students and staff originating from diverse cultural contexts who actively collaborate with people and institutions worldwide. We are committed to the values of the

European project to create a fair and sustainable future for all and first consider the ethical, logistical, and technical infrastructures needed to support and enable this vision. The following **FIVE** principles are core to the success and sustainment of our pedagogical framework:

- Diversity and Inclusion

- Equality and Equity

- Mobility

- Sustainability

- Technological Mediation

Diversity and Inclusion

Figure 2 - Diversity and Inclusion. Image courtesy eueuropaunida.blogspot.com

"Let´s all take a bolder stand for diversity and act about it. Let´s show our commitment to equality"

"With more diverse workplaces, we will create a fairer and more equal Europe for all."

-Helena Dalli, EU Commissioner for Equality

Diversity and inclusion are pivotal concepts of European justice and fundamental rights, and FilmEU is fully engaged in creating a diverse community of learners,

educators, researchers, and stakeholders. Diversity is defined as **the presence of a range of identities in the people working, studying, and collaborating in FilmEU** and specifically reflects those aspects of identity that directly impact a person's access to opportunities, resources, power, and decision making (Thomas, 2020).

Diversity has been shown to have a positive impact on the quality of student performance (Chilton, 2022). Diverse classrooms and workplaces help foster tolerance, critical thinking, self-confidence, and engagement that continue long after the educational experience has ended (Gurin, 2004; Shaw, 2005). Diversity plans should include both qualitative and quantitative goals. Reaching these goals means to have succeeded in creating a European University that is, in fact, diverse and inclusive.

Having a diverse community is not enough; FilmEU also aims to support and nurture diversity with inclusive strategies and practices that **promote meaningful social, creative, and academic interactions** among its diverse persons and groups (Tienda, 2015). Inclusion means **designing and creating environments both in and out of the classroom that promote equity and diversity.**

Inclusion recognizes and attempts to correct ways in which our institutions currently create or reinforce barriers for diverse identities in our communities and to involve them in devising solutions. In the classroom, inclusion means embracing and providing resources for inclusive teaching methodologies and approaches to ensure that no one is left behind. Inclusiveness also means designing accessibility so that people with disabilities can use facilities and circulate in campus as easily as those without disabilities. We consider inclusion to be both a process and a goal, encompassing qualitative and quantitative aspects. It applies to all areas and levels of the educational experience including admissions, curricula development, staff capacitation, student engagement, space design and so on.

The FilmEU diversity and inclusiveness charter will have diversity and inclusion as its principle, understood as the acknowledgement, respect and appreciation of the differences between people, including particularly the related to:

- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Ethnicity
- Religion faith and beliefs
- Country of origin, culture, and language
- Nationality, birthplace, and ancestry
- Age
- Political, ideological, or social orientation
- Marital status and family structure economic situation

- Health and disability

The signatory organizations of the FilmEU charter commit to diversity as an ethical imperative, as a basic principle guiding all its activities, both internally and externally, as part of its core values and its institutional identity.

Equality and Equity

FilmEU is committed to creating and fostering a culture of both equality and fairness, one free from discrimination, bias, favouritism, and harassment. Equality and equity are both important, but they are not synonymous (Buchholz, 2020).

The distinction between equality and equity in education developed out of a recognition that equality policies in which **the same opportunity is made available to all**, has failed to solve problems of diversity, inclusion, inequality, equal pay, and representation in marginalized groups (Sen, 1979; Archer, 2007; Unterhaller, 2012; Mintz, 2021).

Equity recognizes that **some members in society are underserved and do not have the same opportunities as their peers** and thus denotes the practice of providing resources and removing barriers to those in need for the purpose of equalizing opportunity and helping students reach goals and expectations. Equity is necessary to reach diversity and inclusion goals and plays a role in assessments, admission, mobility, and staff capacitation.
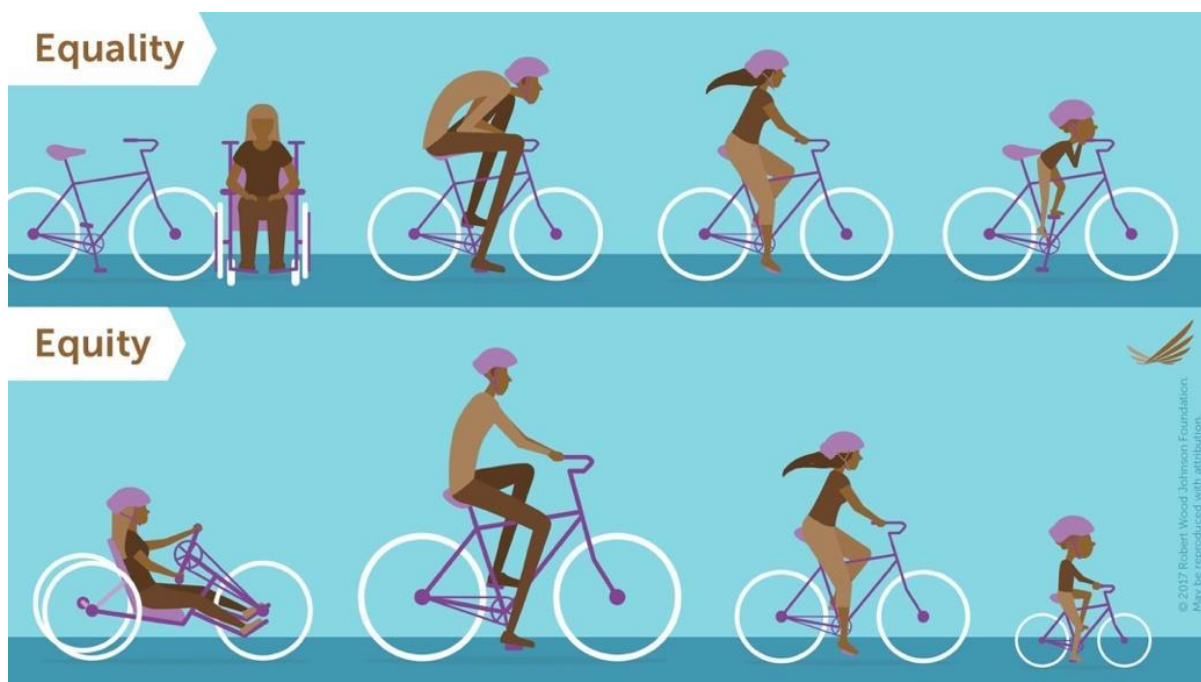

Figure 3 – Equality and Equity
Image courtesy Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2017

Mobility

Mobility is both a core principle and a top priority at FilmEU. Mobility refers to the **free and frequent movement of people, exchange of ideas, and transfer of knowledge and research**. Mobility provides opportunities to collaborate in learning, teaching, research, and cultural appreciation and production amongst and beyond our partnering institutions and communities. FilmEU specifically embraces and promotes inclusive mobility policies and schemes to support and encourage students and staff who have not yet taken part in a physical/blended mobility. We promote all modes of mobility that serve to connect staff, students, teachers, and researchers. It's useful to define these.

- Physical mobility denotes the change of location of a physical person.
- Online mobility means a person joins an activity using online means regardless of location.
- Blended mobility means that part of the mobility is online (in one's home country / or abroad) and part of it is physical (abroad on location).

Mobility is essential to enable joint international research projects, professional development for staff, joint study programmes, internships, and the employment of foreign researchers and graduates who will need international experience to compete in the European labour market.

The more mobility we have, the more internationalised our communities become; the more open, sensitive, and knowledgeable to cultural differences we become; the better our foreign language skills, flexibility of thinking, and tolerance and respect for others. These are key skills for all members of our community to become exemplary global citizens capable of building a sustainable and equitable future.

Sustainability

FilmEU is committed to making a significant contribution to **promoting, developing, and implementing sustainable practices in artistic higher education and research** and in the cultural and creative industries. This includes supporting or participating in initiatives that seek to make the film industry more sustainable (We Are Albert, 2020), striving for sustainability in our staff and student mobilities, and developing and evaluating our use of technology.

We also strive to empower our staff and students with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to address interconnected social, economic, and environmental challenges that are key to a safe and just future (UNESCO, 2019). In addition to being

an ethical imperative, sustainable pedagogical approaches have increasingly been found to have a positive effect on collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving (ActSHEN, 2015; Young, 2015; Sandoval, 2021).
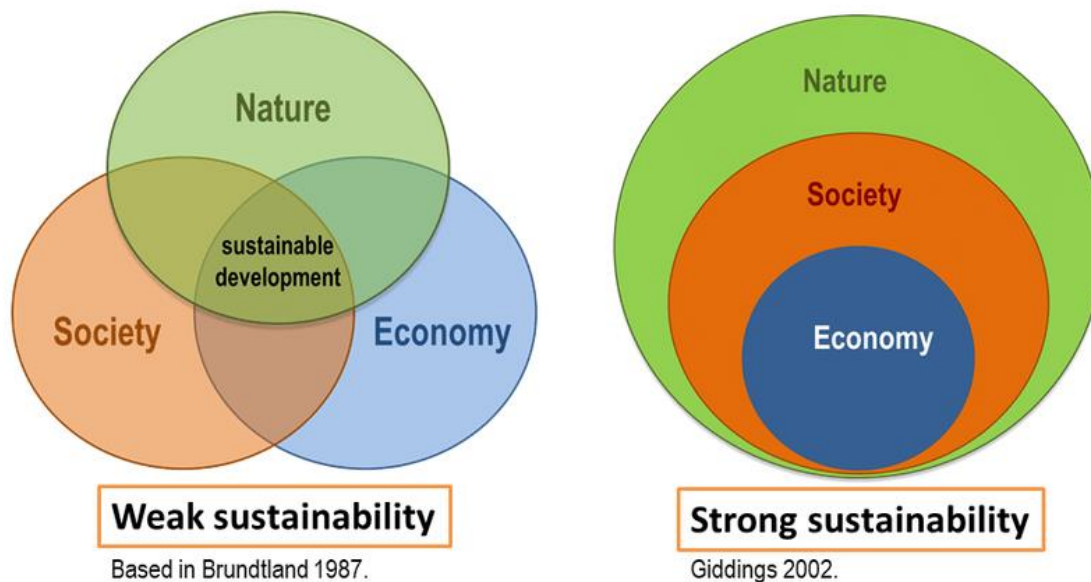

Figure 4 – Weak Sustainability/Strong Sustainability
Graphic representations of weak and strong sustainability: (a) Weak sustainability, or sustainable development, presents the environmental, social, and economic themes with equal weighting and seeks to balance them. This image was developed based on the Brundtland Report and was widely disseminated. (b) Strong sustainability, with a focus on systems, presents the three themes as nested and confers different sizes and weightings to them. This model was presented by Giddings in 2002 (Morandin Ahuerma, I., Ayala-Ortiz, D.A., Contreras Hernández, A., 2019)

Technological Mediation

Technological mediation, first described by Ihde, is the process by which we experience our world through, by, with, and alongside technology and has been typically characterised in subject-object terms (Ihde, 1979; Ihde, 1990). However, new technologies such as biotech and AI are merging our bodies with the world and therefore can no longer be considered in dualistic terms. According to Verbeek, **technologies should be considered as mediators that are integral to our experience and presence in the world** (Verbeek, 2016). Technological mediation at FilmEU encompasses a few key ideas specific to the application of technology in film and media arts education.

- The use of technology in film and media arts should be taken as both natural and fundamental to the creative process: technologies enable students to create work (via tools, equipment, mediums, media).

- Technology is integral to the experience of learning and teaching (via Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and other technological platforms). These

technologies must be fully functional and seamlessly integrated into the learning process.

● Technology plays a key mediating role in how students, teachers, and stakeholders collaborate and communicate with others to shape, complete, curate, and share their vision and creative works.

● The use of technology in film and media arts implicitly contains ethical and social components that must be viewed critically especially in the areas of policies, privacy, equity, and human health.
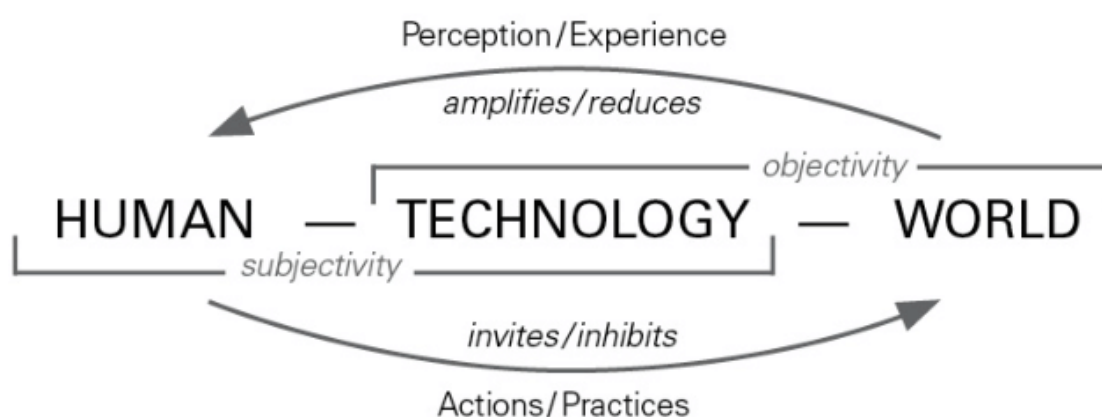
Figure 5 – Technological Mediation
(Hauser et al, 2018)

LEARNING THEORIES

The theoretical foundation of the Samsara pedagogical framework is built upon three primary and deeply connected theories of how people learn: Constructivism, Social Constructivism, and Constructionism. It is worth examining these theories a bit closer to understand their differences and the implication they have on learning and teaching.

Constructivism

Constructivist theories of learning can be traced through an impressive lineage of transformational thinkers from the twentieth century such as John Dewey (1936, 1938), Marie Montessori, Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner (1960) and others. Constructivist theories propose that **knowledge is actively constructed through direct experience** rather than passively absorbed or transmitted.

Teaching and learning implications

- Teachers and learners are unique, complex, and bring their own experience to educational practices
- Context is key to understanding and constructing knowledge
- Students must be actively engaged in the learning process
- Students learn best through doing and reflecting on doing

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism takes constructivism a step further with the concept that **knowledge is constructed through interaction with others.** Social Constructivism was first coined by Vygotsky (1978) within the domain of early child development. He reported on how children learn within a close range of adults and peers, through language and culture. However, the collaborative nature of learning is not limited to childhood development. It offers insight in learning and development through the whole lifespan of individuals.

Teaching and learning implications

- Collaboration is a vital aspect in learning and teaching
- Collaborative learning is a process of peer interaction that is mediated and structured by the teacher
- Dialogic approaches and facilitation are important
- Gaps and differences between students and between students and teachers gives rise to techniques like scaffolding, tailored curriculum, peer-to-peer learning and teaching, group activities, and so on

Constructionism

Constructionism as an academic framework and educational pedagogical approach was heavily influenced by constructivist theories and grew out of MIT mathematician and educator Seymour Papert's work in the late twentieth century (Papert, S. & Harel, I., 1991). Constructionism is known primarily for its application in science education and as such considers deeply the role tools and technology play in learning. As outlined by Papert, constructionism differs from constructivism primarily in its emphasis on making and experiential learning. It proposes that **knowledge is constructed through the creation of a "public entity" or meaningful artefact that others will see, use, or critique**. This artefact may be a thing or an idea, but it must have some meaning to the learner. Through the process of making something meaningful, learners take charge of

and construct not just the artefact but also their own minds. The approach is characterized by hands-on creative experimentation, iteration, and collaboration.

Teaching and Learning implications:

- Students learn best and are motivated when they are making something in the real world and solving problems that are meaningful and relevant to them and to society

- Technology, tools, and the manipulation of physical and digital objects are essential to learning

- Process is as important as the product

- Students must have ownership in the production of artefacts

- Creativity and playfulness are important to learning

- Learning is characterized by inquiry, experimentation, trial-and-error, iteration, and reflexivity

METHODOLOGIES

The learning theories described above—Constructivism, Social Constructivism, and Constructionism—have profoundly influenced artistic practice, education, and research, most markedly since the mid-1990s in response to the monumental technological and social transformations which have taken place and continue to affect society. Samsara has embraced **FIVE** key pedagogical methodologies that practicalize these theories for the 21st century: Artistic Research (AR), Challenge Based Learning (CBL), Design Thinking (DT), Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). It should be noted that these methodologies do not exclude others but are those we consider best suited to achieve the FilmEU mission and our pedagogical goals.

Artistic Research (AR) and Practice as Research (PaR)

Artistic Research argues that **the creative outputs of art practice are a source of knowledge.** The creation of these artefacts requires research, skill, and a broad knowledge base including tacit and implicit knowledge. Practitioner-researchers address a specific research inquiry to broaden existing knowledge through the creation of new artistic artefacts informed by research and theory. Artistic Research privileges the role of the artist and often encourages them to work in hybrid or transdisciplinary ways that draw from different industries, cultures, and philosophies.

Practice as Research (PaR)

Practice as Research (PaR) is one strand of Artistic Research and therefore is implicitly practice-based. PaR as a methodology is characterized by **the simultaneous undertaking of practice and theory together** so that each inspires the other; practice influences the theory researched, and theory influences the practice undertaken. PaR promotes different and diverse ideas and ways of knowing and champions both tacit and implicit knowledge as well as explicit and academic knowledge. PaR states that artefacts and research made by doing are valuable as knowledge outputs. PaR is undertaken by practitioner-researchers and as such requires a high standard of practical skill by a filmmaker or artist who has already acquired a deep knowledge of their art form. Therefore, it is ideally suited for postgraduate, PhD and doctoral candidates.

Henk Borgdorff's (2006) overarching classifications provide us with a helpful tool to distinguish artistic research from other types of research concerning the arts. Adopting and modifying the trichotomy of Christopher Frayling (1993), Bergdoff distinguishes between three types of art research: *on* the arts, *for* the arts, and *in* the arts. Research *on the arts* is well-established in the humanities and includes disciplines such as art or film history. Research *for the arts* is concerned with the tools and materials used in creative practices and is commonly found in the sciences. PaR may be considered artistic research *in the arts* which takes art practice itself as an essential component of both the research process and its results.

Key ideas

- Creative outputs are recognised as sources of knowledge and as knowledge outputs
- Experienced filmmakers and artists bring implicit and tacit knowledge to their work
- Requires practice and research be performed in parallel so both influence each other

Implications for film & media arts education

Artistic Research and PaR are essential to increasing and recognising how artists contribute to human knowledge. The importance of advancement in artistic research has been reinforced by an ever-growing number of European organisations and networks dedicated to the topic such as ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts). ELIA has produced many seminal documents detailing the principles and rationale of artistic research in higher education. AR in all its forms including practice based and practice-led research in the arts has developed rapidly in the last twenty years globally and is a key knowledge base for art education in Higher Arts Education

Institutions (HAEIs). The Vienna Declaration is intended as a policy document addressing political decision makers, funding bodies, higher education and research institutions as well as other organisations and individuals catering for and undertaking AR. Their work addressing AR and doctoral education can be found in The Vienna Declaration (2020), The Florence Principles (2016), The Salzburg Principles (2005), and the Erasmus funded work on Advancing Doctoral Supervision (2018-2021).

Challenge Based Learning (CBL)

Broadly speaking, Challenge Based Learning is founded on the notion that **learning should take place while addressing, solving, or proposing solutions to real and pressing problems in society**, fusing constructivist and constructionist pedagogical concepts with real-world applications.

CBL is an evolution of Problem Based Learning (PBL), and although the terms are used interchangeably, the key difference is CBL's explicit emphasis on social impact (Leijon, Gudmundssson, Staff & Christersson, 2021). Problem-based methodologies have been demonstrated to have a positive effect on problem-solving, long-term knowledge retention, the ability of students to apply knowledge they have learned, and to promote creative and critical thinking (Yew, 2016; Ulger, 2018).

CBL has its origins in *Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow – Today*, a research project in which Apple collaborated with high school teachers and students to identify curriculums, assessments, skills, and learning outcomes that would best prepare young people for the twenty-first century (Apple, 2008; Apple, 2010). Since then, it has increasingly been embraced by the higher education sector most notably in Engineering, Medicine, and Design (Leijon et al., 2021). FilmEU is one of the first universities to apply CBL to the arts.
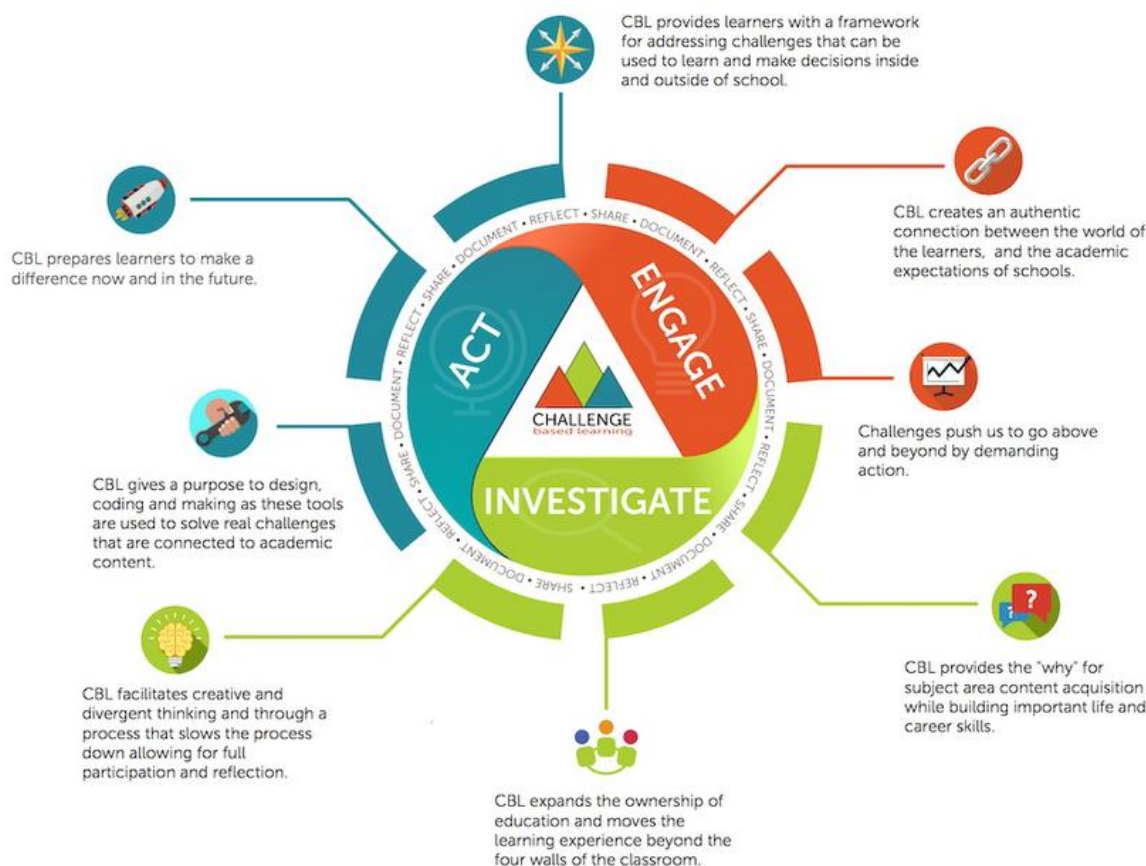
Figure 6 – Challenge Based Learning
image courtesy challengebasedlearning.org

Key ideas

- Involves some element of social impact or engagement, or an exploration of a social issue

- Characterized by questioning and critical thinking (inquiry-based)

- Requires a collaborative learning experience in which teachers and students work together with people outside of the academic setting in industry or the community

- Challenges and solutions to the challenge are devised by students and stakeholders (e.g., are relevant to the learners and participants)

- Asks students to reflect on their learning and the impact of their actions

- Requires that students share and publish solutions with stakeholders, community members, audiences, etc.

- Equalises the value of knowledge and the application of knowledge

Implications for film & media arts education

Challenge Based Learning in arts education treats the exploration of problems in society as an integral part of the creative process. Students are encouraged to not only critically evaluate the social impact and implications of their own creative work but also explore how their creative work can actively and positively transform society. This does not imply in any way that personal expression is diminished, nor that the sole role of art is to solve social problems. CBL should be considered an open-minded approach to social engagement, not a dogmatic one.

Coupling purpose and creative production is a formidable pedagogical tool in arts education because it provides opportunities to link meaning and making, a concept that is often difficult for film and media art students to master. This parallel work helps students grasp how both form and content work together to create meaning. It also encourages students to consider the critical connection between thinking and doing and to explore the collaborative, disciplinary diverse nature of making and reception in film and media arts.

CBL can take many different forms in film and media arts education and may appear at any stage of the creative process. Some examples include collaborating with NGOs, businesses, or communities to identify issues and solutions; participatory or interventionist filmmaking; interdisciplinary collaborations (STEAM); public screenings and discussions and so on.

Design Thinking (DT)

Design thinking methods grew out of twentieth century product and industrial design. These methods later found application in user interface, user experience, and software design but are now commonly applied to all types of problem-solving. Design thinking **uses empathy, ideation, and iteration to work out the best solution to a problem**. Throughout the process of developing answers and solutions, Design Thinking centres the user, forces students to challenge common assumptions, and attempts to redefine the problem at hand in a human-centric way. It is a non-linear process, which encourages returning to earlier stages with new knowledge and experiences. This way of working allows for problems and challenges to be understood on a deeper level so that more substantial and profound solutions can be found. By iterating and re-iterating the process, the final product can be the best version of what it can be.
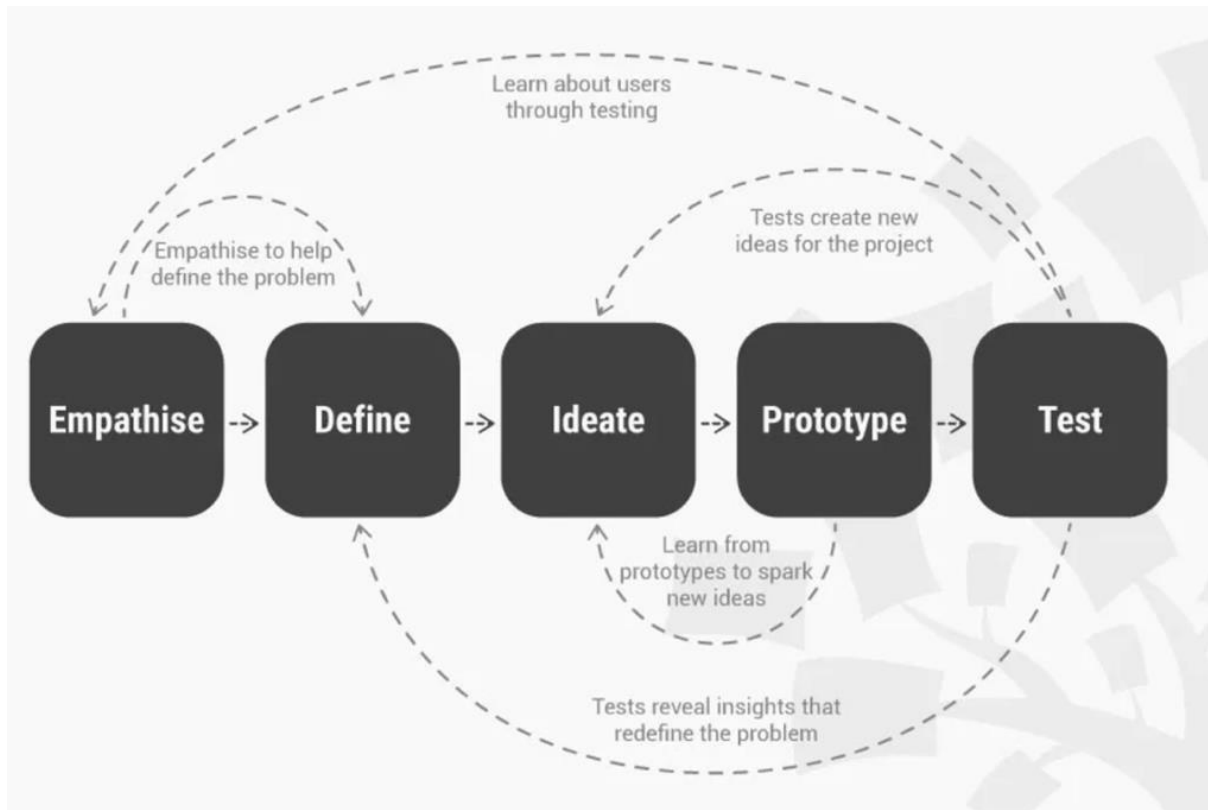
Figure 7 – Design Thinking
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Teo Yu Siang and Interaction Design Foundation. Copyright license: CC BY-NC-SA 3

Key ideas

- The process is rooted within a deep understanding of the audience the solution is designed for. The development of empathy is crucial in the development of profound solutions

- DT is inquiry-based in which the creator's own assumptions and belief systems are also a subject of inquiry. An open mind and a willingness to learn and relearn what we thought we knew is crucial

- Design thinking is a hands-on process of brainstorming, sketching, testing, and retrying. As it is a non-linear process, you are always free to take a step back and adjust the process as your understanding of the matter changes

Implications for film & media arts education

Although Design Thinking was not developed with education or arts education in mind, it does bear compelling features that enable engaged learning. Students as well as teachers involve themselves in a process of solving real-life problems, using the principles and process of Design Thinking. As they both develop a shared understanding of the problems at hand, it redefines the traditional teacher-student

relationship. Students and teachers work together on a project as equals, which allows for a safer and more fruitful learning environment. Design thinking also provides a framework for discipline-diverse approaches for students to cross the boundaries of their domain. A student in the visual arts, for example, can get the opportunity to work interdisciplinary with students in STE(A)M or Social Sciences and even professionals. Design Thinking can function as a common language between the disciplines involved in the project. Through the combined expertise, artists learn to work together with others and use their own creative perspective as a strength. Finally, Design Thinking methodologies are particularly useful for curriculum and instructional design.

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) is a collective name for **teaching and learning strategies that involve e-learning**. Through various kinds of educational software, teachers and students alike are provided with an enhanced learning experience that allows for multiple modes of collaboration, interaction, and co-creation. TEL also facilitates and allows for the inclusion of different modes of learning and teaching which can increase ownership and inclusion for all students. Examples include the use of inquiry tools such as Kahoot or Mentimeter, online environments such as Toledo, Canvas, Moodle, or MS Teams, as well as online collaboration tools like Google classroom, Whiteboard, Real time-shared documents, and Zoom. TEL enables many student-centred methods like flipped classrooms (in which teachers and students switch roles). It also opens opportunities to improve hybrid and remote education.
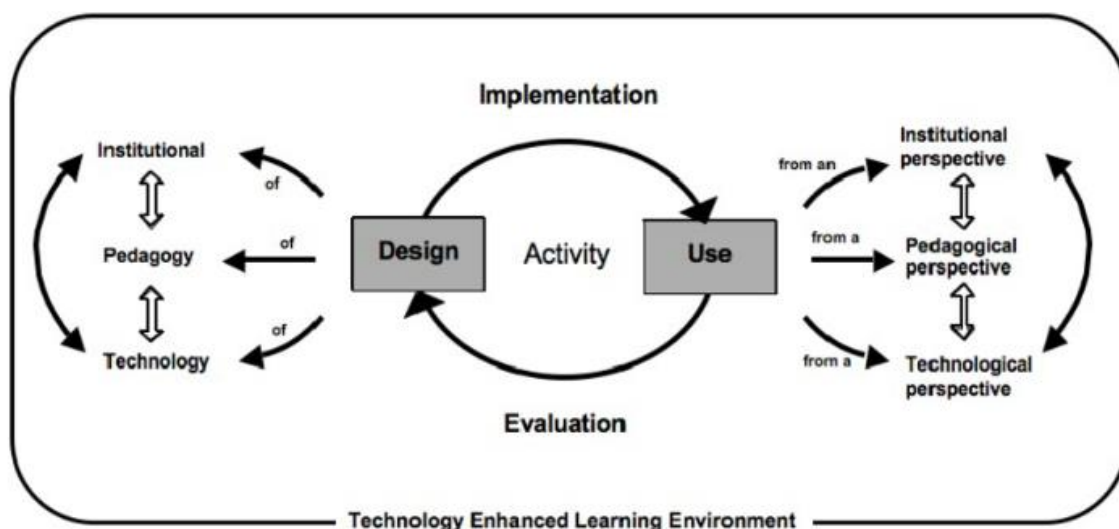

Figure 8 – Technoloy Enhanced Learning
Courtesy of Research Gate. (Wasson, 2007)

- Uses software applications and platforms to enhance or enable creative interaction, co-creation, collaboration, learning, and engagement in the classroom

- Considers technology as a natural, integrated part of the learning process but that must also be evaluated critically

- Input from staff and students, quality assurance, and well-considered implementation processes are essential to ensure that technologies measurably enhance motivation and engagement, facilitate the teaching and learning process, and improve learning outcomes

- Requires attention to new developments and the willingness on the part of teachers and students to adapt to them

- Requires that training and support is provided so that teachers can make proper pedagogical use of TEL tools and that both staff and students can access, administer, use, and understand the tools

Implications for film & media arts education

Technology is obviously an implicit aspect of film and media arts education as films and media art cannot be created without it. TEL helps teachers respond pedagogically to the numerous challenges we face at FilmEU in making complex, collaborative audio-visual co-productions involving many countries, languages, modules, programmes, stages of production, students, teachers, calendars, and modes of mobility. These activities call for methodologies that helps us to collaborate and make the most of both online and offline worlds.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a student-centred methodology developed by CAST, a non-profit education research and development organisation, and is inspired by advances in cognitive neuroscience research. It offers a framework that **integrates knowledge about the learning brain to inform the design of environments that support all learners** (CAST, 2018) and assists educators in creating equitable learning conditions in which each student gets an equal chance and feels included. It helps educators account for individual voice, learning style, and neurodiversity within a student population. It enables inclusion and equity.

UDL recognises that every student has a unique fingerprint in how they learn best and that this results in a large variability within students. This variability has been defined by three areas in the learning brain: one that manages the 'why' of learning (the affective network), another that manages the 'what' of learning (the recognition

network), and one that manages the 'how' of learning (the strategic network). Rather than trying to force students to adapt to an environment, UDL calls for adjustments within the learning environment itself. In this manner, many of the key learning barriers can be removed more efficiently, such as by revising the design and goals of the syllabus or curriculum, or the assessments and methods being used. It is important to note that the UDL methods do not target the outliers in the student population, such as students with disabilities, but accounts proactively for possible variability.
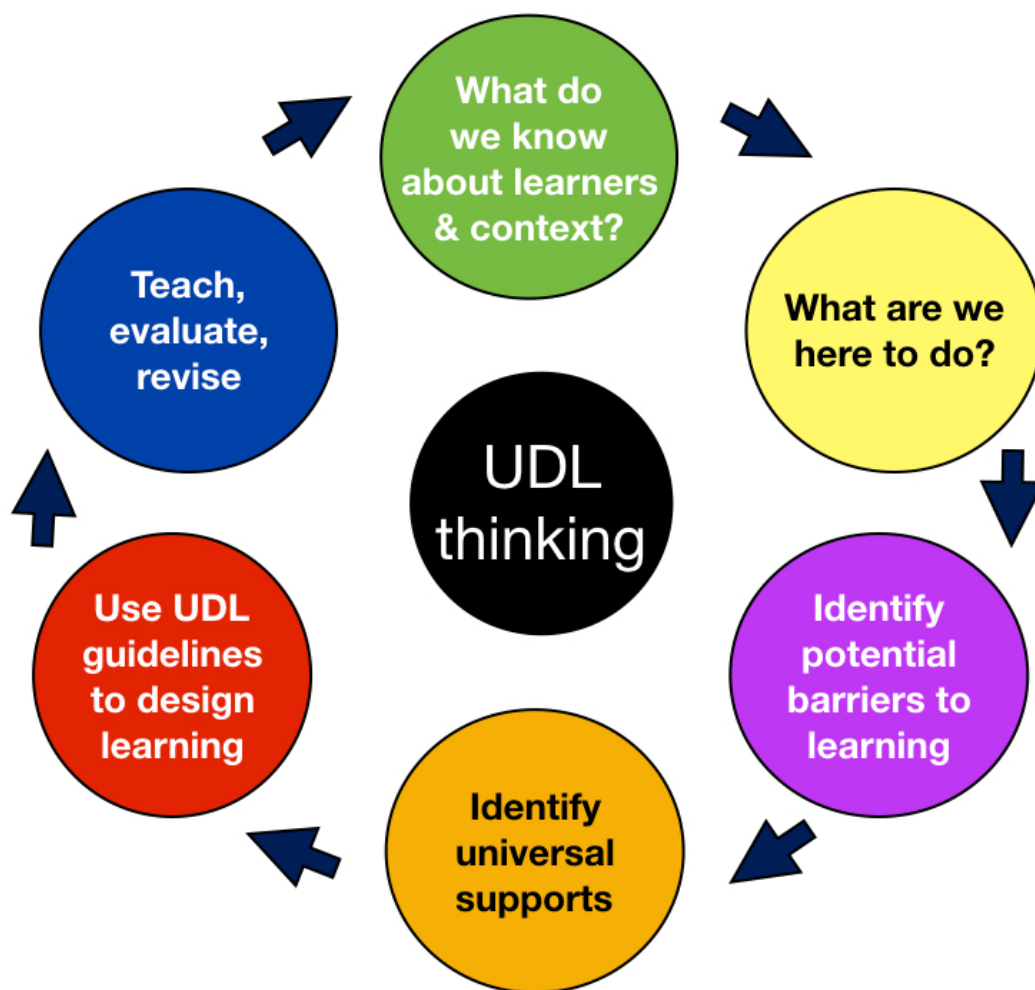
Figure 9 – Universal Design For Learning
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Key Ideas

- UDL looks different in every classroom and depends on the group of students
- Every learner should know the goal of the learning activity they are doing
- The learning environment provides an array of options for students to study and learn the same content

- The student has access to resources from the start of the session or lesson

- A by-product of the learning process is the development of a foundational self-knowledge of the student. They learn to understand themselves and how they learn best. They internalize their own learning.

The UDL process

- **Engagement.** Look for different options and modalities that allow and motivate learners to sustain their interest. For example, let learners get ownership over their learning process by leaving some choices to them. Give assignments that are relevant to their own realities. Gamify skill-building and information gathering. Let them be physically active during learning and let them move around.

- **Representation.** Information should always be available in more than one format. For example, audio, video, or hands-on learning all appeal to a different part of the brain and allow for different kinds of learning.

- **Action and expression.** The learning environment should allow for different ways to handle the information and to present what one has learned. Get creative with assignments: let your learners choose between creative forms of presenting their learning process, for example by making a comic book or doing an oral presentation.

Implications for film & media arts education

The variability of students is especially important within the arts, and UDL is a methodology for enabling the student-centred approach so important to arts education. With an artistic mindset and often unique view upon and interaction with the world, students of the arts are stimulated to develop divergent views and articulate them through many different means. UDL provides a framework for educators to interact with students' strengths and limitations and challenge them on what matters, their art, not how they should be learning by society's standards.

APPROACHES

In practice, the methodologies described above rely on certain approaches to teaching which also follow constructivist and constructionist theories of learning. We have identified **FIVE** key approaches which we will prioritise at FilmEU: discipline-diverse, hybrid learning, project-based, student-centred learning, and team-based. It should be noted that these approaches do not exclude others but are those we consider best suited to achieve the FilmEU mission and our pedagogical goals.

Discipline-diverse

Discipline-diverse in our framework refers to the **multitude of techniques which attempt to integrate the practices, methods, and analytical frameworks from more than one discipline to examine a theme, issue, question, or topic**. The goal is to investigate patterns of information between different subjects and to make connections between them. Interdisciplinarity, crossdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and integrative learning are all approaches which integrate disciplines in diverse ways. The definition of these terms often varies, so a clarification is given below.

- *Interdisciplinarity* analyses, synthesizes, and harmonizes links between two or more disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole.

- *Crossdisciplinarity* refers to practices and techniques which seek to involve more than one discipline or branch of knowledge. It may be considered synonymous with interdisciplinarity.

- *Multidisciplinarity* draws on knowledge from different disciplines, but each tends to stay within its boundaries. Multi-disciplinary projects and activities might see many different disciplines working together to solve a problem (e.g., a multi-discipline panel of artists working together might include painters and filmmakers); an artist person who works in many different artistic fields (e.g., a multi-disciplined artist both paints and makes films but does not usually combine them).

- *Transdisciplinarity* integrates the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries.' (Choi et al, 2006)

- *Integrative Learning* develops skills in students to solve complex problems and broader societal issues, now and into the future

Key ideas

- Sharing knowledge between disciplines is necessary to solve problems

- Multiple viewpoints deepen and broaden knowledge and understanding

- Multiple viewpoints promote collaboration and empathy

- Making connections between disciplines helps students find new ways of seeing and develop a more broad, critical understanding

Film and media arts are one of the most discipline-diverse forms of art practice as they require a complex combination of social, technical, and creative knowledge and skills. This approach is also a significant feature of Challenge Based Learning, in which students are encouraged to seek collaborators outside the discipline of art. This approach is key to developing cross-curricular projects involving different disciplines and stakeholders, for training outside of one's primary domain, and for considering one discipline or role from the point of view of another.

Hybrid learning

Hybrid learning or blended learning (previously 'e-learning') proposes to **mix learning environments**: face-to-face instruction and online/virtual learning environments (Doering, 2006). These environments are used in such a way that the combination becomes a strength for both modes. It allows for genuine connections and the building of a good on and offline student community, as well as providing means for distance learning and lowering barriers to learning. By providing asynchronous learning possibilities, i.e., watching a recorded class at any time, as a supplement to synchronous learning and face to face instruction, learners are offered more opportunities for collaboration and less limits as to when and how they learn, while simultaneously preserve the feeling of being connected to their school and peers. Learning is no longer time bound or site specific.

It may be useful at this point to enumerate and define the various technologically influenced classroom configurations:

- **In-person** denotes synchronous, live learning where students and teachers are physically present in brick-and-mortar classrooms.

- **Remote learning** typically denotes synchronous live learning where students and teachers are all online.

- **Online learning** typically refers to asynchronous self-directed learning such as MOOCs and/ or activities that can be completed online. It also refers to any type of learning done online.

- **Hybrid learning** or **Blended learning** denotes any combination of learning modes. Hybrid is also used to describe synchronous live learning where some participants are online, and some are in-person.

Key ideas

- On- and offline learning allows for a wide array of multi-modal learning. It provides the learners with a sense of ownership and a way to internalize their

own learning process by offering them diverse ways to engage with course content.

- Learners should have consistent access to resources and routines: a clear and consistent learning environment allows learners to know where they look for their courses, assignments, and teacher communications.

- Educators should work toward a strong community and a unified culture within their course and learning institution, also online.

- Allows for self-direction, but also provides some boundaries. When teaching synchronously, educators can move beyond lecturing into interactive workshops, tactile experiences with equipment, role playing, etc. Letting students learn by unguided discussion, within the boundaries of a two-hour session will engage them, without leaving them feeling unsupported.

Implications for film & media arts education

Hybrid or Blended learning using assistive technology allows for communication across different languages and physical boundaries. It provides shared experiences in real-time and online in which students from multicultural backgrounds can co-create and engage with each other and the discipline without being restricted within their own reality. Hybrid learning is a key approach at FilmEU to allow for multiple modes of interaction and inclusion.

Team-based learning (TBL)

Team-based learning (TBL) is defined as an **active learning and small group instructional strategy** that provides students with opportunities to apply conceptual knowledge through a sequence of activities that includes individual work, teamwork, and immediate feedback (Parmelee, 2012). TBL provides opportunities for (Burgess, Diggele, Roberts, & Mellis, 2014):

- Continuous teaching in a manner that is engaging.
- Catering for a considerable number of students.
- Providing immediate feedback
- Involving students in decision making
- Promoting active small groups and class discussions

Key ideas

- The primary learning objective in TBL is to go beyond simply covering content and focus on ensuring that students can practice using course concepts to solve problems (Michaelsen, 2008)

- The application of knowledge occurs through conceptual and procedural problem solving (Michaelsen, 2008)
- It is characterised by carefully formed and managed teams, frequent and timely feedback, problem solving, student peer evaluation

Figure 10 – Team-Based learning
Curtesy of Team-based learning: design, facilitation
and participation in Peer Teaching Training in Health Professional Education

Benefits of Team-Teaching

- Students are provided with more than one explanation of complex cases
- Promotes teacher development by peer-teacher observation and reflection on their teaching and learning
- Exposure to different teaching methods and knowledge for both educators and students
- Debate and more active discussions
- Role modelling of interprofessional collaboration
- Brings humour to the classroom

(Burgess, Diggele, Roberts, & Mellis, 2014)

Steps in Team-based learning

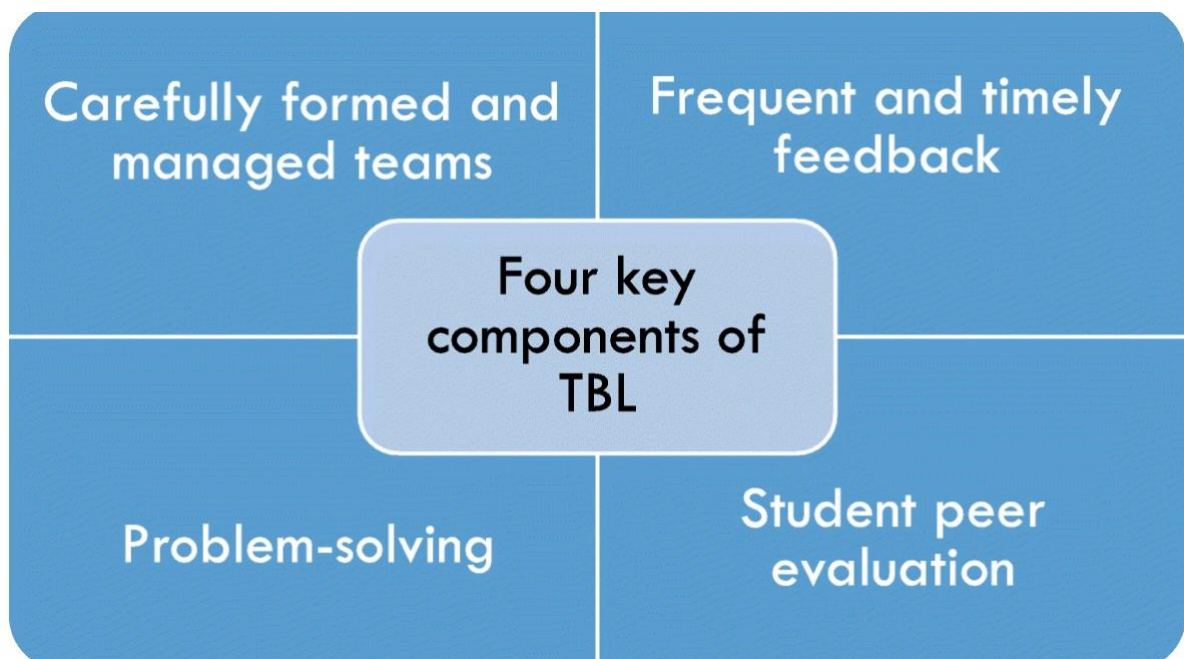Figure 11- Steps in Team-Based Learning
Courtesy of Team-based learning: design, facilitation
and participation in Peer Teaching Training in Health Professional Education

Implications for film & media arts education

The impact of Team Based Learning in education has been researched more deeply by traditional sciences such as health studies than by film and media arts. A scientific methodological approach to its use in the FilmEU consortium, using devices such as Individual Readiness Assurance Tests (IRATS) and Team Readiness Assurance Tests (TRAT) will lead to an important breakthrough in the understanding and use of TBL in an artistic environment.

Project-based

A project is a systematic attempt to produce a tangible result. A project is specific, finite, and its results are observable and measurable. Project-based methodologies are those in which students are educated by designing and implementing a project or artefact as a part of the learning process.

Key ideas

- The use of hands-on activities to learn or reinforce knowledge and skills
- Activity and results are observable and measurable
- Recognition that the process is as important as the product
- Timeframe and requirements are clear, defined, and finite
- Characterized by prototype & iteration
- Can be done individually or in groups
- Characterised by formal assessments of work as it progresses

Implications for film & media arts education

Although practice seems an obvious and essential component of studio arts education, it has not always been emphasised in the European tradition of film and media arts education in which theory has often taken precedence over practice, or in which the creation of work is set outside of or on top of classwork. The aim of a project-based approach is to fully integrate the development of creative projects into the curriculum.

Student-Centred learning (SCL)

Student-centred approaches are those that **treat students as co-creators in their own education**. Their needs as individuals, and as a student collective identity, are recognised. According to The European Student Union (2010), this approach fosters transferable skills such as problem-solving, and critical and reflective thinking. Placing co-design and ownership of their learning with students empowers them to be active partners, encourages self-directed learning, and enhances motivation and a feeling of belonging. The change in thinking away from *teaching* to an emphasis on *learning* has moved focus from the teacher to the student (Barr & Tagg 1995). However, in a student-centred approach, it is also important to consider the role and perspective of the teacher.

Key ideas

- Students have a say in what and how they learn
- Students feel safe to express themselves
- Students have a role in the governance of the institutions in which they participate

Implications for film & media arts education

Empowering students by actively encouraging co-creation of their learning experience enhances engagement, retention, and participation, and moves away from the 'chalk and talk' model of educating. Learning is no longer passive. Transferable skills are developed by engaging in the practice, and the lecturers also benefit as co-designers and facilitators. Self-determination, presence, personal investment, and community are essential to the success of all students, but particularly in the arts.

SAMSARA PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Samsara is the name of the pedagogical framework initiated and implemented by FilmEU and encompasses the principles, learning theories, methodologies, and approaches to learning and teaching presented in this Handbook.

In Buddhism, *samsara* is often defined as the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In literal terms, the Sanskrit word *samsara* means "flowing on" or "passing through." We chose this name because it reflects our holistic and iterative approach to film and media arts education.

Samsara proposes that artistic teaching, learning, research, and production are practice-based, collaborative endeavours that engage ethically and actively with societal problems through the creative use and mediation of technology. At FilmEU, we believe that **people learn best when they are making meaningful creative work together, on equal terms.**
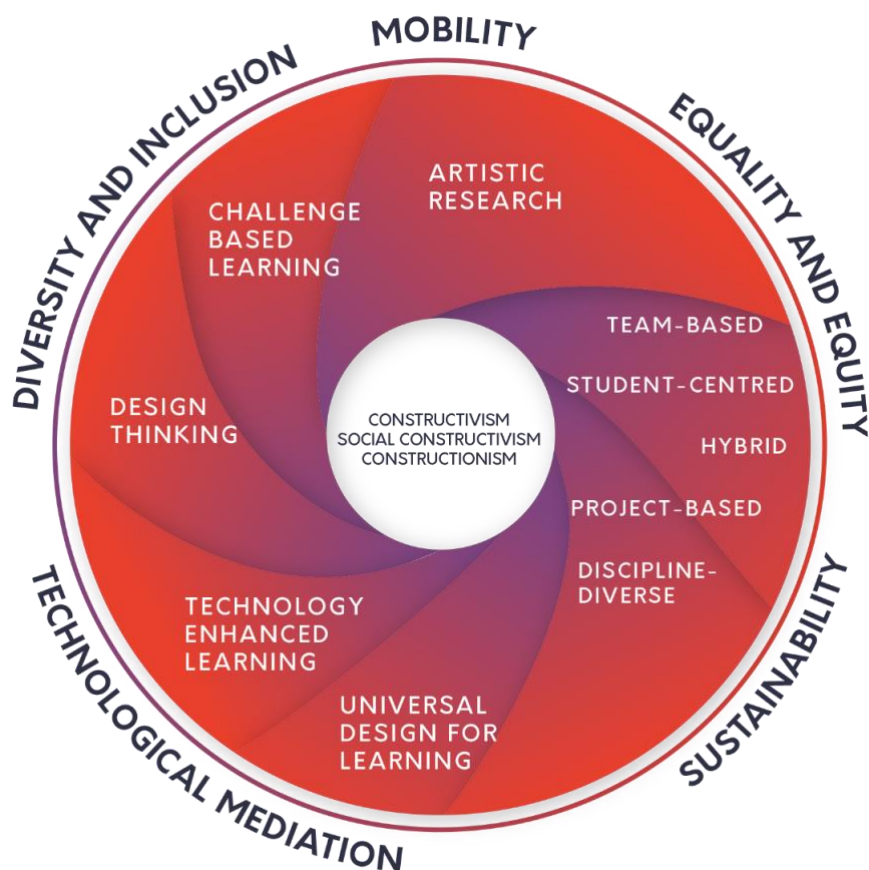

Figure 12 - FilmEU Samsara Pedagogical Framework (2021.12.01)

GOALS

The Samsara framework has been designed to foster excellence, innovation, and collaboration in audio-visual artistic higher education. The methods selected and the goals we hope to achieve with Samsara emerged from an investigation into the conditions and practices underpinning contemporary film and media arts higher education generally and in our own institutions. The first part of the investigation involved collecting and analysing best practices in our alliance (FilmEU, May 2021). This resulted in the identification of several transformational practices and the challenges they address. Concurrently with this task, an historical and theoretical review gave us a broader picture of film and media arts education in the context of the European tradition, cinematic communication theory, and ongoing technological and societal changes. From this work, we have identified the following **SEVEN** goals for Samsara:

1 Actualise the relationship between theory, research, and practice

Theory and practice presented in isolation make it difficult for students to master complex audio-visual skills and concepts; research through the arts is underexplored

2 Increase the participation & integration of multiple disciplines, communities, and areas of knowledge

The role and effect of participation, interdisciplinarity, dialogism, sustainability, and ethics are underexplored in film and media art production and educational practices

3 Increase the contribution of film and media arts to the solution of real-world problems

The potential of film and media arts to foster social change is underexplored; the pedagogical impact of social engagement in film and media arts education is also underexplored

Educational approaches to asessments, admissions, and engagement in the arts do not always consider the full range of knowledge, skills, and competences students are expected to gain

7 Increase transparency and equity at all levels of student and staff engagement

4 Reformulate traditional creative hierarchies toward more collaborative structures

Treating some creative roles as authorial and others as technical creates an inbalance in which some disciplines have more power or say than others in how projects proceed

The participation and presence of marginalised groups is underrepresented and undersupported in some areas of film and media arts

6 Expand support and remove barriers for underrepresented groups to participate and thrive

Adapting pedaogical approaches to the continuous emergence of new technologies has proven to be a challenge for many film and media art institutions

5 Embrace ethical technological mediation of the craft at all stages of learning and development

Figure 13 – Samsara Goals

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Film and media arts higher education has been profoundly impacted by the way arts education has historically been crafted and delivered in Europe and by the increasingly complex and unique ways in which cinematic communication both embodies and generates meaning. Furthermore, the rapidly changing technological and ethical environment in which audio-visual culture is produced and consumed has had a profound effect on the creative industries, higher education, and society. As such, the historical and theoretical context of arts pedagogy is highly relevant to the genesis of the FilmEU Samsara framework. Here we orient Samsara in relation to the continuing evolution of European higher education in the arts and demonstrate how Samsara addresses these challenges, embraces European values, and contributes significantly to advancing European cinematic arts education.

European Film and Media Art education in a changing world

Film and media art schools in Europe are traditionally linked to the education models of music and art conservatories that are specialised institutions distinct from universities or academia (Maassen & Olsen, 2019). The focus of European film schools has been on teaching the technical and artistic elements of cinema in which the master/disciple relationship sits at the centre of artistic educational practice. In this 'individualising' model, theoretical knowledge is not typically accompanied by the acquisition of hands-on experience and as such these institutions do not customarily take a practice-based approach to film and media arts education. The separation of the art institution from academia means the exploration of knowledge is often limited to the artistic domain and interdisciplinary interaction is rare. The examination and reformation of this model is a key challenge that FilmEU's pedagogical approach attempts to address.

The main factor that has historically differentiated a European film school has been its focus on cinema as an art form rather than as an entertainment or commercial enterprise and the individualising disposition towards cultural production that this focus implies. However, the creative process of making film and media art is largely collaborative. As such, not only does the individualising nature of the apprentice model dismiss the reality and needs of the collective creative process that underlines cinematic communication, authorship, and collaboration, but it also does not allow for the full exploration of the medium's potential to foster social change through creative activities that correspond to social and cultural outcomes (Carpentier, 2020).

In recent decades, European film and art institutions have been under great pressure to replace this conservatoire model with ones that can accommodate the orderly cycle of degrees proposed by the Bologna reform, and many institutions have responded to this imperative (López, Bote, Rives & Bañón, 2019). Simultaneously, the need to ensure compliance with European Standards, namely those articulated in the 2004 "Dublin

Descriptors", and more recently in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF, 2018), resulted in a process of "academisation" for many of these institutions. These reforming processes brought to the fore the tension between the institutions' original focus on professional training and the much broader humanistic mission to which academic institutions are now affiliated. This has made it very difficult for many arts institutions to incorporate the structural changes that have been occurring vis-à-vis the medium and society alike.

However, throughout this transitional period many film and art institutions, as well as programmes within universities which were based on similar apprentice educational models (Lepori, 2008), have begun to develop new pedagogical approaches that provide a pragmatic response to these challenges. Samsara, FilmEU's pedagogical framework, seeks to further the project of transition while also allowing for the contextual flexibility and respect for tradition that an inter-European consortium requires. The aspects of Samara that specifically address the challenge of reforming the conservatoire model include **practice-based**, **team-based**, and **discipline-diverse** approaches as well as its **Challenge Based Learning**, **Design Thinking** and **Practice as Research** methodologies.

The construction of meaning in film and media arts

Those who undertake the study of film or media art must not only master multiple artistic and technical skills but also learn how to create processes and sequences that construct meaning through text, image, sound, time, and interaction and then culminate these skills to express themselves (Wollen, 1998; Kaplan, 2010). The technical complexity of understanding these structures and elements means that film and media art students are predisposed to learn techniques, often limited to technology and equipment. The teaching of film production, for example, including the use of a camera, editing tools, programming languages, digital technologies, and so on are all skills to which students quickly adhere and relate naturally. However, learning how to construct meaning, although one of most important tasks that filmmakers and media artists must master, is neither easily apprehended nor easily explained. Thus, another challenge that concerns us is how Samsara will pedagogically support the process of teaching students how to construct meaning through cinematic and audio-visual communication while also considering emergent digital practices.

How meaning is constructed is a long-debated problem in the history of narrative cinema (Barthes, 1972; Jost, 1983; Genette, 1983; Metz, 1990; Stam, 1992). Many different theories have been explored, from the structuralist and semiotic approach of Barthes (1972) which claims that the generation of meaning in a narrative is based on pre-existing societal structures, to the narratology of Genette (1983) which associates the creation of meaning to the presence of a fundamental set of textual elements that facilitate the audience's understanding of the narrative (Jost, 1983). Investigations into the construction of meaning and aesthetics through procedural (Seamen, 2007),

interactive (Kwastek, 2013), participatory (Kester, 2004; Bishop, 2012) and immersive mechanisms (Jarvis, 2018) continue to add new layers of theoretical complexity.

One of the reasons why theories are so diverse, and the forms difficult to learn and teach, stems from the fact that film and media art communicate *simultaneously* through patterns, events, and procedures that are made up of text, image, sound, and time. As such, the work is polysemiotic, a locus of meaning, read within a cultural framework provided by the filmmakers or artists and received, experienced, and sometimes even created, by multivarious audiences. The complexity of the relationship between the formal elements and its whole requires that the future filmmaker or media artist not only deeply understands how manipulative processes generate meaning but also comprehend how meaning arises from the narrative and discursive structures of the medium and the connection of meaning with the multiple contextual frameworks of the "real world". In other words, the development of a broad literacy alongside the development of technical and artistic skills is required.

The separation of art institutions from academia, as discussed above, means that few attempts have been made to include a broad literacy capable of addressing cultural experience, aesthetic appreciation, critical understanding, and creative production *along with* the mandatory acquisition of technical and artistic skills. Yet, a filmmaker or media artist's ability to construct meaning depends not only on creative and technical skills but also on the ability to look at the world and from it to produce a discourse. In narrative cinema, for example, writing and conception are intrinsically linked; they imply defining a theme, having a voice, organising the gaze, imagining the action, envisaging visual and sound aesthetics and so on. In general, film students demonstrate difficulty in defining themes or developing a critical stance vis-à-vis what surrounds them. The recurrent use of formulas or a certain idea of film genre, for example, may result in stereotyped and emptied-out films disconnected from a relationship with the reality and experience of the world. Accordingly, film and media art teaching are different from the teaching of mere techniques and technology. Its objective must be focused on the development of methodologies and processes that stimulate knowledge, curiosity, and creativity and which explore the relationship between critical thinking and creative production.

A "rhetoric of creativity" (Banaji, Burn, & Buckingham, 2010) is a useful notion that integrates different understandings of this concept and seeks to formalize an emergent structured model which both implies that creativity is inherent to the consumption and production of artistic products, whether popular or elite, and requires competence to respond to the problems and vicissitudes of the world. According to this perspective, creativity is not inherent to human mental processes but is instead social and situational.

It is in this sense that FilmEU's pedagogical framework has incorporated the **constructionist** approach initially designed by Papert (1972) and activated primarily through Samara's **Challenge Based Learning** (Johnson, Smith, Smythe, Varon, 2009) and **Design Thinking** as well as its **student-Centred**, **team-based, project-based** approaches (Dole, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016). These constructionist practices allow students to construe their views and relationships with the world, to acquire knowledge, research, and criticism that help them develop and construct film and media arts projects. Teachers can view arts pedagogy as a creative process and cultural practice joined together to construct meaning firmly anchored to the real. Samsara thus addresses both the challenge of teaching the construction of meaning and the tensions arising from the apprentice model of conservatories, especially the separation of theory from practice, the lack of disciplinary diversity, and individualizing practices.

Adapting to emergent digital practices

FilmEU is emerging at an exciting and challenging time both for cinema and for Europe. The ascendency of digital technologies; the proliferation of mobile devices that allow us to capture moving images easily and efficiently; the introduction of inexpensive, accessible, and easy-to-use editing tools; and the emergence of SVOD and content sharing websites have all changed the way moving images relate to society, education and teaching and learning practices (Fritz, 2018).

Furthermore, advancements in filmic technologies have seen a proliferation of storytelling platforms and an explosion of audio-visual communication modes. VR, AR, immersive and volumetric cinema, and media art all offer filmmakers and students new tools, new techniques, and new audiences. However, adapting curricula and teaching approaches to the continuous emergence of digital cinema and ever newer environments of consumption, production and distribution has proven to be a challenge for film and art institutions (Atkinson, 2018).

The creation of FilmEU labs as pan-European research centres and Samsara's emphasis on **Artistic Research** and **Practice as Research** are dedicated to these new forms of cinematic expression and are designed to embrace them by supporting filmmakers and media artists to lead the way in developing innovative technologies and inventing novel ways of telling stories. They will be the pioneering storytellers of the future.

Additionally, Samsara's embrace of **Mobility, Technological mediation, Technology Enhanced Learning,** and the attendant **hybrid learning** approaches they imply, are key. These principles, methodologies, and approaches are required to support innovation responsibly and prepare FilmEU for an ever-changing future.

Ethics in the creative industries

Throughout Europe there is a call for creative industries and educational institutions to become more aware of their role within the world both culturally and environmentally. Samsara's core principles of **Equality and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**, and its **Universal Design for Learning** methodology and **student-centred learning** approach all answer this call. FilmEU's goal to create and sustain a community of diverse artists both in our students and our teachers creates a space for new stories to be listen and created in a community of makers that can support and work together both whilst studying and throughout their future careers.

Samsara's principle of **Sustainability** in education aims to create a film and media arts university that is sustainable and environmentally conscious. From pre-production to distribution each step must be carefully considered and evaluated to create new pathways that are both environmentally and ethically sustainable. FIlmEU students will not only learn from cinema and media art history but endeavour to create pathways and processes for the future.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The purpose of this section is to describe the long-term goals as well as the current stage of Samsara implementation at FilmEU. It also gives general guidelines on designing and planning a **FilmEU Annual Challenge** and shares some approaches for incorporating challenge-based practices into film and media arts modules.

We are currently in the **implementation** stage of development in which we are prototyping and testing Samsara. It is important to note that each European country has its own tradition of film and media arts education. Creating a common pedagogical framework which honours these traditions and differences, draws upon shared learning, supports creativity, and fosters a creative decentralization of the historic hierarchies in film and media arts education and practice are all challenges we face, and which come to fore in the implementation stage when we are testing our ideas in the real world. Samsara itself must be taken as an iterative process that will need to be continuously revised through practice.

Implementation has both short-term (e.g., pilots for the purpose of iterative improvement) and long-term goals (e.g., application to an international BA and joint master programmes). Each implementation attempt provides added information, which will be investigated, analysed, and used to generate new, innovative ideas and revisions to Samsara.

Short-term objectives

- Conduct pilots and QA to test various modes of inter-consortium cooperation including mobility, staff collaboration
- Create basic training modules for teachers
- Work plan for 2022/23 Annual Challenge
- Research and ideation on ways to integrate challenge-based modules into existing curriculum
- Determine how broad or deep the pedagogical model can or should penetrate existing curriculum and programmes
- Guidelines on how to implement pedagogical model in new programmes
- Guidelines on planning and managing student engagement activities around the Annual Challenge

Long-term objectives

- Quantitative and qualitative increase in inter-consortium cooperation and mobility (by means of an Annual Challenge and other activities).

- Penetrate all levels of cooperative activity (teaching, learning, research, extra-curricular activities) and participation (faculty, staff, students).

- Integrate Samsara into both new and existing curricula.

- Create online resource for staff (pedagogical resources) and students (Challenge resources)

Timeline

- 2021/22 Annual Challenge – Challenge Module Pilot (1 harmonised inter-consortium module), Massive open online courses (MOOCs), CineClub, Staff and Student Engagement activities.

- 2022/23 Annual Challenge - Large Scale Pilot, FilmEU Labs, Staff and Student Engagement activities, Staff capacitation pilot, Online resources, Samsara e-flyer

- 2023/24 Annual Challenge, International BA programme, joint master's programmes, FilmEU labs, staff capacitation, harmonised curriculum.

ANNUAL CHALLENGE

The FilmEU Annual Challenge unites and inspires our partner institutions to work together around a common cause. Each year, a new **Challenge Topic** (or topics) will be selected and explored collaboratively across the consortium. The Challenge Topic is a broad area of inquiry that deals implicitly with a societal or business problem that will be viewed through the lens of film and media arts. The topic guides the development of educational modules through the academic year and serves as a basis for teachers and student engagement such as training, partnerships, cross-cultural exchanges, research, meetings, events, and exhibitions.

Challenge Topic Guidelines

An Annual Challenge Topic should provide opportunities for **both** creative audio-visual expression and social engagement on the part of students. Key aspects to consider about a Challenge Topic include:

- has social impact

- can be explicitly linked to the development of key artistic skills and knowledge

- is significant and create a sense of urgency and relevance in learners and participants

- is broad enough in scope to provide multiple entry points for student growth & exploration and allow for an inclusive space for a great diversity of students who come from cultures in various stages of social transformation

● can be curated by partner institutions: expertise and resources to develop and execute modules, activities and events

Procedure for selecting an Annual Challenge Topic

Because the topic must be urgent and relevant to participants, ideally it should be decided upon by faculty staff, institutions, students, and/or business and community partners. The topic should be decided in advance of the academic year to allow that training and engagement activities can be planned in good time. This Annual Challenge will last for an entire year and curricula design and other activities depend upon it. As such, it is recommended that topics should be determined in the year prior to the challenge and engage students and staff at all partner institutions if possible.

Annual Challenge planning guidelines

Once an Annual Challenge Topic is defined, modules and activities to support should be designed and implemented. This requires a coordinated, collaborative effort between staff and students at all partner institutions and involves input and cooperation amongst various resources; especially pedagogical (WP2), curricular (WP3), mobility (WP4), technology (WP8), and event planning (WP10). Research labs (WP5) and artistic research (WP6) will also play a big role in the Challenge. Planning for an Annual Challenge should begin the year prior to implementation and be managed by a dedicated team designated by the FilmEU project management board (WP1).

Pedagogy & Curriculum (WP2 & WP3)

● organise and administer the selection process of the Annual Challenge topic or topics.

● determine which existing modules will be integrated into the challenge for the year or identify new modules to be designed.

● identify and recruit teachers knowledgeable on the topic.

● identify and recruit industry-related and social organisations or stakeholders to participate.

● recruit students to participate in and register for challenge-designated modules.

● select contexts within the topic to explore.

● design syllabus for modules that incorporate social and creative outputs.

● devise or define a mobility scheme for challenge-designated modules.

● design and implement training modules and online resources for teachers on Samsara methodologies and approaches

● Develop training courses or modules (Samsara, CBL, etc.).

Mobility (WP4)

- organise and administer mobilities necessary for challenge-designated modules and activities.
- support teachers and students in their mobility.

Technology (WP8)

- provide and support technical infrastructure to support mobilities required by challenge-designated modules, research labs, teachers, and students.
- coordinate the use of facilities, labs and film and media art equipment.

FilmEU Research Labs (WP5) & Artistic Research (WP6)

- devise and coordinate research activities to enable and support challenge modules.

Teachers and student engagement (WP2 & WP10)

- design and execute student and staff engagement events and activities to support the topic.
- curate or develop from scratch conferences, screenings, exhibitions, colloquia, panels, clubs, and student extra-curricular activities.

CASE STUDY: 2021/22 CHALLENGE PILOT

The first consortium-wide pilot began during the 2021/2022 academic year and at the time of writing this document is still ongoing. The pilot consists of a year-long Challenge Module designed for 2nd year film and media BA students in the consortium and represents the first test implementation of the Samsara pedagogical framework. The module was derived from an existing ULHT module developing a mini web series and was expanded to encompass challenge-based methodologies and to include an international cohort of students. Students will come together and work using a Team-based approach. Students will define, investigate, and address a societal challenge concerning Sexuality, Gender and Censorship (challenge topic), by developing and producing a pilot for a short-form web series or other media art project in collaborative teams drawn from three of the Alliance institutions: IADT-Dublin, LUCA-Brussels, ULHT-Lisbon, as well as an associated partner Baltic Film BFM – Tallinn.

This pilot begins the important work of institutional harmonization, allowing for cohesion, exchange of information, experiences, knowledge, and creative outputs

throughout the consortium. By doing this FilmEU can identify further steps to achieve the cross-national collaboration that will continue. Another important part of this pilot project is to begin the mobility of students and teachers throughout the consortium both physically and remotely. Mobility, and the collaboration it facilitates, is an important benchmark for FilmEU. As such, this pilot project is the first step in testing and understanding the future pedagogical implementation of FilmEU projects.

Module structure and plan

For the pilot, students were selected by individual institutions by application or interview. Seven students from each institution engaged in the pilot program. Students were asked to demonstrate their engagement with the challenge, their technical skill level, and their proficiency in English – both written and oral.

The module is organised into nine submodules which form the basic instructional framework. Each student takes FIVE of these nine submodules: THREE mandatory core submodules (Ideation, Writing, Teambuilding) in the fall semester and TWO of six role-dependent practicum submodules (Pre-production, Production, Image Post-production, Sound Post-production, Distribution, Transmedia) in the spring semester. Which practicum submodules a student takes is determined by the production roles the student will be fulfilling. These five submodules are the basis for student assessment.

Submodule name	Type	Semester
Ideation	Core	1
Writing	Core	1
Teambuilding	Core	1+2
Pre-production	Practicum	2
Production	Practicum	2
Image Post-production	Practicum	2
Sound Post-production	Practicum	2
Distribution	Practicum	2
Transmedia	Practicum	2

First phase: Series (or open format) development (4-6 ECTS)

In the first semester students explore the Challenge Topic through group and individual activities such as guided discussions and master classes provided by all institutions. They engage with creative exercises and research to identify parts of the challenge that they find interesting and would like to address through their work.

The first semester mimics the Development phase of film and television production / open formats and encompasses Engage and Investigate phases of CBL. This includes

the conceptualisation, writing, organising, pitching, and pre-planning of the series. The submodules for this semester are the same for each student: Ideation, Writing, and Team Building. The students write a screenplay of a series-pilot and the outlines of 4 other episodes. If students choose another format of audio-visual work (open format), the outputs are to be adjusted accordingly.

Figure 15 - Still from *The Queen of Ireland*, directed by Conor Horgon (2015). Students and teachers viewed the film.

Figure 16 - Q&A attended by teachers and students on 2021-11-26
With Rory O´Neill - Panty Bliss - (pictured) and Conor Horgan, protagonist and director from
The Queen of Ireland. Students and teachers discussed both the film and LGBTQ+ civil rights.

Second Phase: Series production (4-6 ECTS)

The second phase starts with an intensive team building week, a lab where all students physically meet. During this week students from each institution pitch one project. Following this, they engage with pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution phases of a single pilot episode from the series which was developed and completed in the previous semester. Apart from the teambuilding submodule in which all students participate, submodules will be different for each student in this second phase according to their production and post-production roles.

Timeline

The project started in October 2021 and ends in June 2022. Student mobilities will take place from February till June 2022.

October 2021 - December 2021

- Ideation phase: Local development process without student mobility.
- Local writing process in teams of 3-5.
- Students will meet 9 times.
- Masterclasses to fuel this process.
- Mobility of teachers, for the development process (theoretical classes, introduction to subject, preparation of challenge and brief, development of presentations).
- Outputs: Each institution develops 3-5 projects = 12-20 projects in total.

February 2022

- Team building module (physical mobility): January 31st – February 4th at ULHT
- Selection of one project per institution
- Formation of 4 mixed international teams
- Closing of the screenplays (fiction) / concepts (documentary, open format)
- Greenlight Pitch
- Pre-Production from Feb 27th onward
- Start of the Transmedia component

March 2022

- March 7th - 11th Shooting Week
- March 14th Back in parent school

April- May 2022

- Post-production begins
- Online mobility of staff and students, hybrid learning
- Image Post-production: March 21st – April 8th
- Sound Post-production: 20 days. April 9th – April 24th
- Extended editing during May

June 2022

- Physical mobility of staff and students
- Final presentation of audio-visual works - June 8th IADT during Summer School
- Final presentation of Transmedia outputs
- Conclusion of the Annual Challenge

Learning outcomes

On completion of the Annual Challenge, students will have experienced challenge-based learning, ideation, development and production of a mini-series, and the creation and production of a complementary transmedia project.

The students must be able to think critically and develop tools to discuss the ethics of gender, sexuality, sexual representation, and censorship at an international level. They must also be able to understand and embody the core FilmEU values such as freedom of speech, acceptance of diversity and respect and their importance for artistic creation.

Students should be able to understand the creative, technical, and production workflows involved in the creation of a mini-series / open format. In the ideation and writing process, the focus lies in creating and developing unique dramatic ideas. We strive to create projects that display a highly creative grasp of contemporary storytelling and, at the same time, can fit both the current market situation and the needs of commercial partners. From a theoretical perspective, students must acquire methods of research applicable to the given topic and adjust to the research demands brought forth by its specificity. Both critical awareness and a knowledge of contemporary and historical films and series are key to this process. In the written dossiers, students contextualise their own work through mood boards and references. In the individual report, they demonstrate their ability for self-reflection.

In the transmedia module, students should be able to define and characterise transmedia storytelling and cross media marketing approaches to this kind of multi-platform distribution project. They should understand the key concept of transmedia storytelling and possess knowledge of significant transmedia examples in different genres, including research on platforms, distribution environments and target audiences. The overall goal here is to strengthen awareness of the possibilities of transmedia.

Next steps

The 2021/2022 Pilot tests Samara's Challenge Based Learning concepts and methodologies as well as team-based learning and approaches to mobility. The pilot also implicitly delves into the additional challenge of harmonising the model across multiple layers of education. Results from the pilot will be fed back into the model, into future pilots and will be presented in the next version of this Handbook. The first pilot is designed to test:

Challenge Based Learning

- Assess pedagogical issues that arise when organising creative arts around a challenge and in joining social and creative outputs

- Assess the influence of CBL on designated humanistic, technical, and creative learning outcomes as well as student and teachers' engagement and satisfaction

- Assess the efficacy of various techniques used to commit students to the challenge

● Iidentify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to implementing CBL across the consortium (with staff and student contributing)

Team-based learning

● Identify teaching and learning issues that arise when dealing with super-diverse groups of students, teachers, administrators, businesses, and social organisations as well as workable solutions to resolve difficulties and differences

● Assess the effect of group authorship on designated learning outcomes and teaching approaches

Mobility

● Evaluate the ability of existing technical and administrative infrastructures to support a variety of mobility modes and combinations (physical, online, blended, long-term, short-term, students, teachers, etc.) and hybrid learning that this module requires

● Determine the appropriate scope and consequences of blended mobility on learning, supporting infrastructures, and teaching (when dealing with team-based creative work which has complex technical and logistical requirements such as in film)

Harmonisation

● Identify pedagogical issues that arise when four unique institutions share the teaching of a single module

● Identify problems and viable solutions with schedules, learning outcomes, curricula, and other obstacles to teaching in a harmonized module

CHALLENGE-BASED TEACHING STRATEGIES IN FILM & MEDIA ARTS

FilmEU has full confidence in the creativity of its staff and students and in their capacity to innovate on the methodologies presented in this Handbook. The ongoing development and execution of the 2021/22 Pilot discussed above is a testimony to their dedication and skill.

We embrace flexibility and the freedom of staff and students to experiment with how Challenge Topics are interpreted and explored, and the myriad types of social and creative outputs that may be generated. At the same time, we recognise that organising modules, programmes, and activities around a Challenge Topic using a challenge-based paradigm requires an approach to teaching and learning that that

some artist-educators will need to learn how to master. We continue to work to put in place the training, collaborative structures, and resources required for staff to succeed in this new venture. Until these resources are in place, we'd like to offer few suggestions for approaching CBL in a film or media arts classroom by touching on the importance of a few key techniques:

- Facilitation
- Contextualisation
- Joint social and creative outputs

Facilitation

CBL is an inquiry-based methodology. It does not rely on the simple presentation of facts and knowledge but rather on posing questions and scenarios designed to trigger curiosity, imagination, and experimentation in students through discourse and action (Aditomo, et al., 2011; Atard, et al.,2021). Developing facilitation skills and using facilitation strategies are one of the most effective ways to do this.

Facilitation skills include the ability to actively listen, observe and adapt, to check groupthink, to give clear instructions, and to manage time. However, even if a teacher is endowed with these skills, it is not always easy to apply them during the process of teaching. Some ways to address this difficulty are the use of cooperative strategies and groupwork in which students manage their own groups, leaving the teacher free to observe the groups, provide specific feedback, and treat problems which cause unequal participation among group members (Cohen & Lotan, 2002). Co-teaching is another useful strategy to improve facilitation.

Preparing open-ended questions (essential questions) ahead of time on the Challenge Topic when developing lessons, exercises, and activities (McTighe & Wiggens, 2013) is also a useful facilitation strategy applicable to Challenge Based Learning. Students should also be encouraged to formulate their own questions (guiding questions) for the purpose of researching and investigating solutions to the challenges they set for themselves.

Contextualisation

As a student-centred methodology, CBL requires intense engagement and independence on the part of students and a lot of planning and preparation on the part of educators. Approaching the Challenge Topic contextually assists educators in efficiently focusing and organising activities.

Educational activities that guide students to find their own way into a topic will stimulate motivation and commitment. As such the first contextual level is necessarily personal: *What do I care about? What does this topic mean to me? What do I know about it? How do I know?* Starting with students' personal connection to the topic through a well-crafted exercise is an effective way to stimulate interest, to build *camaraderie* and morale, and to help to students find collaborators and build teams by moving from the personal to the social (group) context.

Teachers, event planners, and instructional designers might also consider ways to engage students in the broader social (local, country, EU, world) context of the topic by selecting a few key contexts to explore: scientific, economic, geographical, cultural, theoretical, political, historical, and so on. This might include looking at how the topic affects people outside of the student's own sphere of knowledge and experience, or the effect the topic has had on cultural or artistic production historically, or how some specific geographical context affects understanding. For example, a Challenge Topic might inspire engagement activities such as:

- a curated film series to explore some specific theoretical, historical, or geographical aspects of the topic, connecting staff and students across universities on a point of mutual interest.

- a panel discussion on a scientific or business aspect of the topic, spurring a debate or interest in research.

- a meeting with or presentation by a local community organisation or business, inspiring a creative collaboration or idea for a project.

Such broad contextual efforts engage teachers and students in the topic, develop critical and creative thinking skills, and present opportunities for creative co-production. Contextualisation also provides flexibility for teachers and institutions to adapt the Challenge Topic to their own social and cultural conditions or areas of expertise while still collaborating at the consortium level.

Joint social and creative outputs

One of the challenging aspects of incorporating CBL into arts-based modules is finding ways to integrate social engagement outputs with creative ones, all while satisfying the acquisition of the requisite knowledge and skills demanded by the curriculum. Since creative outputs are not mysterious to film and media art educators, the focus here will be integrating social outputs into creative activities. Because CBL is a project-based endeavour, its stages of Engage, Investigate, Act, Share /Document / Reflect (Challenge Foundation, 2021) correspond well to film and media art production processes.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Film / TV	Game / Software	CBL
Development	Development	Engage, Investigate
Pre-production	Pre-production	Investigate, Act
Production	Production	Act
Post-production	Testing	Act
Launch	Distribution	Share, Document, Reflect

Figure 17 – Stages of Development

There are numerous approaches to incorporating social outputs into the creative process. One approach is to incorporate the CBL notion of a **Challenge Statement** into the development stage of an audio-visual project. This is a statement made by a group of students describing in simple words a (social) challenge they have set for themselves. It answers the question, "What do we want (our project) to do?" This is in some ways a broad rephrasing of the question: "What are you trying to communicate (with your art)?" Exploring ways to undertake a self-defined challenge guides students in the thematic development of their project and points them toward collaborators and reception paradigms.

The distribution / launch stage including marketing, transmedia elements, social media, screenings, and exhibitions also offer great opportunities for students to engage with the broader community in the reception of their work and in so doing address the impact of their work in a public or real-world setting.

Some projects might even involve social outputs at all stages of development, as for example in an audio-visual project in which community contribution and participation in production or testing is important.

Sample projects and exercises

The most straightforward way to illustrate how social and creative outputs can be joined is by example. Using a few hypothetical Challenge Topics, we have created three sample audio-visual student projects with creative and social outputs. These are not examples from existing modules and are for illustrative purposes only.

SAMPLE CREATIVE PROJECTS			
Challenge Topic	Sexual diversity	Disability	Migration
Specific area of interest	LGBTQ+ teenagers dealing with their sexuality	Blind people's lack of access to visual culture	Migrants in Europe feel like they do not belong
Challenge Statement	To help at risk LGBTQ+ teens	To give blind people an alternative experience to viewing visual art	To make migrants feel welcome in Europe

Collaborators	LGBTQ+ advocacy agency (local and EU level); high school; LGBTQ+ high school students	Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted; Visually impaired university students	European NGO; refugees, immigrants, and migrants living in Europe
Creative outputs	Web series, social media campaign	AR application, Making-of video	Documentary film, social media campaign (migrant languages)
Social outputs ("Solutions")	Series development & pilot production in cooperation with the high school students and the high school Screening, and facilitated discussion at the high school Social media campaign (Instagram, tik tok)	Design and testing with the cooperation of members of the blind community Special exhibition in an art institution for museum curators and blind patrons Panel discussion with AR experts in the field of disability with Q & A	Participatory film in which migrants have a say in how they are represented and what they want to say Private screening with migrants and the general community followed by discussion and party Public screening with Q & A with participants

Figure 18 – Sample Creative Projects

To further illustrate how facilitation, contextualization, and social and cultural outputs might be joined in specific exercises, let's look at two sample exercises for a hypothetical 1BA narrative film module. These exercises are examples modified from the practices of an individual teacher for the purpose of illustrating Challenge Based Learning in film education and should not be construed to present the views or attitudes of FilmEU.

SAMPLE EXERCISES		
Challenge Topic	Gender diversity	Sexual diversity
Context	Personal	Social
Essential questions	What is gender? How do I know? What does it mean to me? How is gender manifested in character?	What is heteronormativity? How do we know? Why is it 'the norm'? How is it manifested in public space and setting?

Creative topics	Character, revealing character through appearance and behaviour, character vs. circumstances, screenplay styles and formats, 3-act narrative structure: Act 1	Mood (vs tone), creating mood with formal visual elements (line, shape, colour); form vs content.
Social exploration (cognitive)	Gender spectrum + Character exercise. Facilitated discussion in which students collectively define gender stereotypes on a spectrum from male to female and locate themselves (or image representations) on it	Heteronormativity + Setting exercise. Facilitated discussion. Observe images of settings. Explore ways in which settings might reveal attitudes about sexual diversity.
Creative exploration (practical)	Using the knowledge gained, working in groups students write characters (behaviour, appearance, biography) which purposefully exaggerate or subvert stereotypes; write a scene introducing the character	Students find a location that reinforces or subvert a heteronormative setting. In the location, take a photo that portrays the same setting with three different moods (Melancholy, Foreboding, & Peaceful) by modifying the use of line, shape, colour, and content.
Creative outputs	Characterisation, Character introduction scene (1-page, proper screenplay format, no dialog).	Three photographs of a setting illustrating three different moods.

Figure 19 – Sample Exercises

Conclusion

There is no single, correct way to integrate CBL into film and media arts higher education settings. However, the key teaching strategies to consider include:

- setting up an inclusive environment and engagement activities that allow for inquiry and which gives students a voice and a wide berth for exploration through **facilitation** and **contextualization.**

- devising creative ways to combine student engagement and creative production through **joint social and creative outputs.**

- setting up clear goals and suitable, effective **team building and collaboration structures** (project formats, role definition, mobility, staff coordination, access to external stakeholders).

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