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Basic Knowledge Training for VFX Production Assistants and Coordinators

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Basic Knowledge Training for VFX Production Assistants and Coordinators

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Abstract

Visual Effects (VFX) is a part of the film-making process that takes place during the broader phase of film-making known as post-production. There are two broad groups of individuals who are responsible for the outcome of the VFX project – artists and production. The groups work in conjunction to achieve the team goals. At present, there is no formalized training available for production individuals and much of the required learning is done on the job. This project explores a basic training course for individuals looking to increase their basic knowledge of VFX production. Grounded in industry research conducted by the author, this project recommends a learner-based approach, using industry mentors and industry experts to provide adequate context for learners to apply newly gained knowledge on the job.

Keywords: Visual effects, production, learner-based, context, mentorship

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Phase I: Analysis

Background Information

Visual Effects (VFX) is a part of the film-making process that takes place during the broader phase of film-making known as post-production. Post-production is a broad scope term for the time after principle photography of filming has wrapped. To phrase it more simply, it's the time after filming is done, where all the processes happen to take the raw footage and shape it into the movie that will be shown on the silver screen. VFX is one of those processes that encompasses any digital enhancements and modifications that are required to bring the director's final vision to fruition. Every film has some form of VFX work done to it and unless you worked on the film, the idea is that the viewer can never tell what is done practically and what is done digitally.

Currently, VFX work is done all over the world and because large files are so easily transferred from one location to another, there is no relationship between filming location and the location of the VFX company selected to complete the work. For the purposes of this project, all data and conclusions are drawn from the VFX industry in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

In VFX, there are two distinct groups of people that work on any given project – the artists and the project managers. The artists are the digital creatives, who do the actual work of making digital modifications to the film. The project managers organize the artists to get the work done. Currently, there are a number of schools and programs both face-to-face and online where artists can study the different disciplines of VFX. Most companies have some form of peer learning for artists and are focused on ongoing teaching and learning. However, this same idea of education and learning does not apply to the project management branch of VFX. There is no formalized education available to become a project manager in VFX nor is there any training offered by individual companies. The purpose of this project is to conduct a gap analysis of a VFX production professional and design an appropriate training based on the responses.

Analysis Plan

The original project proposal for this Capstone project was to conduct an analysis to address a specific and already identified training need at my current company. Shortly after the original proposal was submitted, our company announced we were changing project structure and the details of how that is going to work is still in flux. As such, I was not able to get traction at my company to complete this work. There is a lot of talk about the crucial role that training will play in the shift to this new company structure; however, no one is ready to make any commitments at this time.

To compensate for this, I changed my approach slightly. I designed an anonymous, digital survey using the online tool Survey Monkey. I posted the link to the survey on LinkedIn and Facebook, tagging my colleagues and asking them to fill out the survey. I also asked anyone interested in a follow-up interview to leave their email address in the last comment box.

Analysis Report

Changing the approach of my gap analysis ended up providing me with some challenging results. Using the digital survey, I received 16 replies with three offers of follow-up interviews. My results really surprised me and provided a huge challenge. As there is absolutely no training available whatsoever, I ended up with such a broad scope of desired training rather than narrowing down some of my anticipated results.

Of the 16 respondents to my survey, 33% were production coordinators, 26% were production managers, 33% were producers and the remaining percentage were divided between human resources, on-set data wrangler, technology project manager and sometimes administrator. This spread of respondents wasn't what I was expecting – I was expecting more entry-level replies as that was the original target group that I had set out to design some basic training for. This presented my first challenge.

Of the 16 respondents to my survey, 30% have been in the VFX industry for less than one year,

37% for 1-3 years, 6% 3-5 years, 19% 5-10 years and only one responded making up 6% had been in the industry more than 10 years. Given that 58% of respondents were in senior production roles (production managers and producers), the relative inexperience of respondents is worrisome.

Half of the respondents indicated that they had completed some form of post-secondary education related to VFX. However, those who commented with more details about their programs revealed that they had complete broader programs related to Entertainment Business Management, Communications or Multimedia and film production. Some of these respondents admitted that while their degrees were in related fields, they did not actually teach anything specifically about Project Management or VFX.

Just over 60% of respondents said they had received no formal training at their place of work. The remaining respondents claimed to have received some formal training. I think for this question, I failed to define what formalized meant to me. In the comments section of this question, respondents replied that there are studio wikis to read and training at it relates more broadly to studio systems. There was only one respondent who mentioned specific production training opportunities. One respondent described it as a "sink-or-swim" environment and that you might get lucky with a good mentor, but it is really hit or miss.

Eleven respondents chose to answer the question "What, if anything, was something that you would have liked to learn when you first came to your production role?" Half of these responses were geared toward more training about the overall VFX pipeline and work flow and more training for industry-specific terminology. In my opinion, these two are strongly related. The other half were geared towards specific production management skills such as how to prioritize, how to communicate effectively, how to deal with pressure, how to estimate tasks and schedule properly. A point that I want to include as well was one respondent mentioned the idea of training in context – companies present information on wikis to be read but without context it is meaningless.

Thirteen respondents chose to answer the question “What, if anything, would you like those new to production to learn before working on a project?” Five of the responses touched on basic understanding of VFX pipeline and terminology, two responses referenced the hierarchy of the VFX team (who reports to who, etc.), and five respondents included soft project management skills including good business communication skills, PMP certification, organizational skills, and good business etiquette.

In response to the question, “What do you think about current VFX production training?” all 15 of the respondents who chose to answer that question said something to the effect of “Is there any?” There were some variations on the response but all expressed desire for more training, project management training, software training and more technical training such as on set texture photography. One respondent to this question suggested an industry standard training where all companies participate in the development but the overarching body responsible for the training is the Visual Effects Society, rather than any individual company.

To the question, “What do you think about ongoing professional development training in VFX?” many replies were similar to the question about current training. Most do not see any and most would like more. One respondent indicated that all VFX production people should have PMP certification as a baseline. Another respondent says the best bet is to find a more senior person who will mentor you into more senior roles, but, unfortunately, the way to advance is usually by switching companies and then you lose all your company-specific knowledge making it more difficult to fully understand that more senior role the way you would have if you advanced at one company.

Additional comments included another mention that training should come from an overarching body like the VES rather than any individual company to provide more of an industry standard and to help launch careers; more project management training is needed for anyone in a management role, more screening for correct personality and fit for the role and a comment that this lack of training ends

up hurting projects overall.

In summary, this data can be lumped into two categories. One identified gap is the need for training on the VFX pipeline and industry-specific terminology. The other gap identified is the need for more formalized project management training. As there were a couple mentions of PMP certifications being an option, for the remainder of this project, I'll focus on the need for VFX pipeline and terminology training for the remainder of this project.

As such, this places my target audience as individuals looking to launch into a career in VFX or those wishing to improve their current understanding to advance their career. The characteristics of this target audience are usually relatively young and educated individuals looking to break into what is considered an 'interesting' industry. Often their expectations of what a production job is are unrealistic. VFX Pipeline training and how the pipeline relates to project management in this context will help clear up these unrealistic expectations. In this context, there are a few resources on which I will rely. The Visual Effects Society Handbook, Producing Animation book by two Vancouver-based producers, blog of Visual Effects Supervisor Andrew White-Hurst (Oscar award-winner for Ex-Machina and current colleague), and a glossary of VFX terms developed by my colleague (with permission from my employer). My proposed delivery method is to host this training module on Blackboard with one facilitator and two industry experts to guide learning. That way, the training can be accessed by anyone looking to learn more about VFX. My eventual goal is to present this project to the Vancouver chapter of the Visual Effects Society to work together to further training for all levels of VFX production professionals.

The instructional goals for this project are for individuals to gain or improve a basic understanding of the VFX pipeline and to have a mastery of basic VFX terminology. Learners will also gain an overview of the hierarchical structure of the VFX team and understand where they fit in.

Phase II: Design

Learning and Performance Objectives

By gaining a better understanding of the VFX pipeline and VFX terminology prior to entering the industry, individuals that have taken this training module will be able to:

1. Take more accurate notes during review sessions resulting in fewer instances of miscommunication, and providing correct notes for artists so they can complete all required revisions with the next iteration
2. Communicate more effectively with artists by using the correct terminology and demonstrating an understanding of how work needs to flow through the pipeline to each particular type of artist.
3. Conduct more thorough and informative rounds with artists, resulting in more accurate scheduling and the removal of roadblocks more effectively

By learning where in the team structure an individual sits, they will be able to:

1. Understand the reporting structure within the team and who they report to. This will reduce any confusion regarding who individuals are to take instruction from, avoiding any unnecessary tasks and incorrect work.

This may not seem like very many performance or learning objectives, but these four objectives cover the core tasks of a first-time production coordinator.

Instructional Strategy

Learners will work through the VFX pipeline material via a short online course delivered via Blackboard. During the course, there will be one facilitator and two industry experts. One industry expert will be an experienced production professional playing the role of mentor, the other a VFX supervisor. The Supervisor will provide support for learning the pipeline. In addition to assignments,

learners are given the opportunity to post questions and challenges they anticipate or are facing on the job. This will provide a mentorship component to help new production professionals gauge appropriate ways of handling situations and resolving challenges. It will also help clarify the materials in the course.

Introduction – introduction to VFX industry and overview of learning objectives of the course, outlining what the learner will be able to do at the end of the course.

The first section of the Blackboard course will be learning the basic VFX team structure.

1. Overview of the team structure, including a visual map showing how the reporting structure is organized.
2. Reading Assignment.
3. Scenario Exercises. Learners read different VFX scenarios and answer how they would approach those situations.
4. Discussion. Learners choose one of their responses from the scenario exercises, sharing how they would approach each scenario and why. Industry experts have the opportunity to provide feedback on the approach.

The second section of the Blackboard course will teach the Basic VFX Pipeline.

1. Overview of the VFX pipeline, including a visual map showing how work flows through the pipeline.
2. Reading Assignment.
3. Interactive map of the VFX Pipeline that learners can click on and learn more about each unique step.
4. VFX Dictionary Assignment. Learners define ten VFX terms they have encountered and make an attempt to define the term. After reviewing with industry experts, facilitator compiles one document that each learner can keep to use as a job aid later.

5. VFX notes exercise. Learners listen to recordings of review sessions and take notes to mimic what they would be doing in a work scenario. Learners submit this assignment and it is marked by the facilitator.
6. Discussion. Learners choose one pipeline step to post about in the discussion area. Industry experts participate by elaborating on any questions or steering the learner's understanding in the correct direction.

The third section of the Blackboard course will review some basic business communication practices common to VFX.

1. Introduction to communication best practices and reading assignment.
2. Communication case studies.
3. Discussion. Learners choose one case study to discuss. Industry experts participate by providing feedback for how learners chose to handle their case study.

Instructional Materials

As mentioned above, the course will be hosted on Blackboard. Course materials will draw from a combination of textbooks including but not limited to the Visual Effects Society Handbook, Producing Animation book by two Vancouver-based producers, blog of Visual Effects Supervisor Andrew White-Hurst (Oscar award-winner for Ex-Machina and current colleague), a glossary of VFX terms developed by my colleague (with permission from my employer) and readings from CineFX industry publication. Readings are supplemented by multimedia, including VFX breakdown videos to provide context for each pipeline step, a matching game that I will make, case studies and scenarios that I will write based on my own personal experience, and an interactive VFX map which I will enhance but based on Andrew White-Hurst's online blog.

Regarding assessment, there will be a post-survey of participants – both learners and industry

experts - to fulfill Level One of Kirkpatrick's (2016) evaluation model. There will be no grades assigned and students will be awarded a complete or incomplete at the end of the course. Students are required to complete all assignments and mastery of concepts will be demonstrated to the facilitator via the assignments for each section and their participation in discussions.

Phase III: DEVELOP

Introduction

As I have taken an approach of learner-based inquiry for this project, the materials chosen for the course are designed to guide the learners in building a knowledge base but also in seeking out materials and asking questions. “A growing body of research is starting to provide evidence that inquiry-based learning can have a positive impact on student learning. This is reflected in not only their ability to solve problems but also their academic achievements” (Amaral et al. 2002; Elmore, 2000; Newmann et al., 2001), (Li, 2009, p. 41). Developing a strong ability to problem solve is key to success for any good production professional in Visual Effects. Production coordinators are responsible for their own individual areas and are required to operate without supervision in completing their tasks. That is not to say that they will lack support from line managers and supervisors, however they need to develop the ability to seek out and synthesize relevant information independently, and develop good judgement as to when it is more appropriate to seek outside advice and permission when executing job duties. “Learning subject matters through inquiry projects with the support of virtual mentorship provides authentic experiences that connect school learning with the real world” (Li, 2009, p. 42). This purposeful design decision is meant to mimic the many situations that learners may encounter on the job. Production coordinators will often be required to gather pertinent information to report back to supervisors and line managers. Encouraging learners to seek information in this way during the course,

communicating with real work industry experts, they are better prepared to operate in this way once entering the work place.

Instructional materials are gathered from a number of sources. The textbooks for the course are Visual Effects Handbook and Producing Animation. Throughout the course, students are required to seek out industry publications, including reading an article of their choice from CineFX magazine and VFX break-down videos on the internet. Lastly, mentors and industry experts may be asked to provide a Cinesync session recording from an actual production for one of the unit assignments as well.

To help put this information into context, I have created two basic organizational charts to help learners understand the basic reporting structures and team relationships within the industry. These organizational charts will work in conjunction with a blog post written by a Visual Effects Supervisor named Andrew Whitehurst that provides an overview of the VFX pipeline in a simple-to-understand format.

Learners will encounter lots of industry jargon at the outset of the course, but through the learning materials, assignments and industry experts in the course, will develop a mastery of core industry language by the end.

Instructional Materials

The platform used to assemble the course is Blackboard. Blackboard is a good choice for this course because it easily facilitates discussion. The backbone of this course is to provide mentorship opportunities between the participants and industry experts throughout the course and a strong platform of discussion is essential to success. The justification for this design choice is based on Li's (2009) Technology Supported Teaching and Learning Model of Equity, (2009). The model is meant to demonstrate “that [an] inquiry-based learning approach, with the support of appropriate technology can make a positive impact on student learning” (Li, 2009, p. 42). The key players for this model are the

facilitator, the students and the industry experts.

There are some pieces of instructional materials that will be needed for course implementation that will have to be acquired directly before the course is to take place, with the help of the course mentors and industry experts. These materials, while essential to the learning of course participants, fall under the protection of non-disclosure agreements that all VFX studios have. As such, all participants in the course will need to sign non-disclosure agreements in order to participate in the course.

Future course mentors will also assist in the creation of virtual role-playing by brainstorming ideas with the course facilitator to teach students strategies for verbal communication with their team. An essential part of a coordinator's job is to conduct artist rounds each day, speaking with artists to learn about progress of work. Through anecdotal research, it was revealed that this is an often-observed area of weakness in junior coordinators. Seeking out teachable moments from the course mentors will strength the learning opportunities in two ways. First, they are real-life examples that a coordinator may very well encounter and, second, they are situations that the mentors have already encountered and solved so this will help them in providing guidance during the course. Usually difficulties encountered on the job are very context specific; this will help the mentors provide as much contextual information to solving the problem as possible, enhancing the learning opportunity further.

Mentors and industry experts are required to read “Generational mentorship: What millennial mentees want” prior to the start of the course. The decision to include preparatory reading for mentors is meant to strengthen learning for participants in this course, who will largely come from the Millennial demographic but also help mentors return to the workplace with enhanced skills for managing their future production recruits. According to the author of the article, “millennials want mentors who communicate, participate, demonstrate and validate” (Seheult, 2016, p. 40). In the area of communication, the author broadly states that communication is key to any strong relationship, however, in this context communication plays an even greater role. In Visual Effects, tasks to be

completed by production team members must be done in a specific way. Examples include using strict naming conventions and task statuses set out by senior team members and the facility as a whole. There are complex tools and database filters that operate by these rules and if done incorrectly these will not produce the expected results. Tools may break and information will not get filtered through to the correct places. According to Seheult (2016) , millennials desire the ability to infuse their own individuality into processes, so helping them to understand "the reason for a process and the value of the process to the institution enables millennials to assign value to what they are doing even if they are not able to infuse individuality into the process" (Seheult, 2016, p. 40). Millennials are also unique in the style of managers they seek. They are looking for "supervisors who actively seek to build trust, invest in their employees through personal development, and include their employees in as many ways as possible," rather than take more traditional management approach (Seheult,2016, p. 40). By mirroring this participatory style of mentorship during the course, the hope is for mentors to both foster this kind of relationship with learners and also take their own learning back to the workplace where these millennials will eventually be employed. "Millennials also seek mentors who demonstrate personal ethics" (Seheult, 2016, p. 41). The author links this demonstration of personal ethics as another way for millennials to infuse personal flare into tasks when their isn't much room for expressing individuality through rigid task requirements, as mentioned above. An example of this in Visual Effects is the opportunity to create personal pages within the larger database that filters information in a way that works better for their own work-style. A mentor has the opportunity here to show learners how to build and maintain their own personal tools that reflect their own working styles. In this context, the important part is accurate reporting of the information to line managers, but it's encouraged that production develop their own methods of managing respective areas of responsibility so the system works for them. Lastly, millennials want to feel validated in their job performance by receiving feedback – both positive and constructive – on an ongoing basis. "Millennials value mentors

who know how and when to offer feedback" (Nolan, as cited in Seheult, 2016, p. 41). During this course, mentors are given the opportunity to practice this style of feedback resulting in a more open and fluid feedback loop, rather than withholding comments until a more formal review. While millennials may be comfortable with ongoing feedback, current managers may be more accustomed to formalized annual reviews. Acclimating both groups to less formalized feedback together encourages quicker learning and growing while also removing the opportunity for bad habits to continue. Overall, "millennials do not want perfect mentors; they want mentors who genuinely care about them and demonstrate what it means to be a human being striving to contribute to the workforce in a positive and meaningful way" (Seheult, 2016, p. 41).

The course consists of four units, one week in duration each plus an introductory week at the beginning for five weeks in total required time commitment from industry experts and mentors. As the course progresses, the goal is to build a pool of individuals that can be called on each time the course is set to run. Initially, this will be done on a volunteer basis and the course will be free but as the course grows, the future goal is to be able to provide at least a token stipend. Mentors are individuals who are experienced on the production side, to provide more specific feedback to job duties, reporting structure, etc. They can be experienced coordinators, production managers or producers. The only other qualification necessary is a desire to help individuals new to the industry. Industry experts are individuals who are experienced on the technical/artistic side, to provide context and clarification of the VFX pipeline, pointing learners in the correct direction for what technical information and terminology that will serve them best on the job. "Previous research shows that same sex role models can significantly change students' views about the subject matter... It is desirable, therefore, to have role models that identify with the underrepresented gender of the population" (Li, 2009, p. 43). As the VFX industry is heavily male-dominated, as with most technology-related industries, at least one, if not both, of either the course mentor or industry expert must be female.

Each week there are readings, assignments and discussion questions. Again, as this course is learner-based, the interactions between industry experts, mentors and students will largely be driven by the students. Students are expected to spend approximately five hours per week on the course. Mentors and industry experts are meant to spend approximately three hours participating in the course per week. The facilitator spends the most amount of time on the course, between 5-10 hours per week. Mentors and industry experts are expected to log-into the Blackboard discussion three times per week to answer student questions that they have been assigned to post in the discussion area. An example is in Unit One, students are required to read a CineFX article of their choosing and pick a topic for further inquiry and post that to the discussion area. The course facilitator is responsible for marking assignments that are to be handed in. An example of this is the assignment where students are required to listen to a Cinsync recording and take notes. Any future course facilitators must be experienced VFX production professionals so as to have adequate knowledge to mark these assignments.

Types of Course Materials:

Cinesync recordings: Cinesync is an industry standard piece of software used for screen sync review sessions between two or more parties. All parties are required to have the same videos for review and, as such, they can be reviewed and annotated in real time by any of the parties attending. It is a coordinator's responsibility to take detailed and accurate notes during these sessions to later disseminate back to the artists to adjust work as necessary. Cinesync recordings for this course will be acquired from the mentor or industry expert under the signing of a non-disclosure agreement.

Role-plays: In collaboration with course mentors and industry experts, the course facilitator will use the program GoAnimate (https://goanimate.com/) to create virtual scenarios where one of the characters in the video represents a production coordinator and the other an artist or other team member. This is meant to mimic on-the-job scenarios that production coordinators may encounter to

help them learn the correct way to handle difficult situations.

Organization Charts: Two organizational charts are part of the course materials to represent the different team and reporting structures within a VFX studio.

Readings: There are two course textbooks: Visual Effects Handbook and Producing Animation. Students will also be responsible for reading other industry publications as assigned, such as CineFX.

Media: Students are required to seek out different VFX break-down videos on the internet for one assignment.

Blog: Blog post written by Andrew White-Hurst, illustrating the VFX pipeline.

Phase IV-V: Implementation and Evaluation

Implementation and Improvement Plan

At this stage in the project, the course is ready to present to the Visual Effects Society to move into a pilot stage. A number of respondents to my survey suggested that I and the Visual Effects Society (VES) should be involved in the development and implementation of VFX production training. As the VES is the professional association for the VFX industry, that is an appropriate next steps to move the course forward.

The decision to meet with the VES first fulfils two purposes. This is the first time there has ever been a course created to teach this material and not a lot of resources to draw from. This is an incredible opportunity to begin a dialogue and draw out expertise from colleagues. It is crucial to success to gather more opinions and feedback, and resources from the talent pool available in Vancouver.

The second purpose is to allow for a design-based approach to further course development, based on the article Enhancing Student Learning. In this approach, “practitioners, students and researchers work together on the project,” (Li, 2009, p. 45). Incorporating student and mentor feedback

after each sessions allows for a responsive and iterative development fuelled by individuals' experience in the program. This is an integral design concept to this project. As mentioned above, this is the first training of its kind. It is not going to be right the first time, but the goal is to build a successful training module that serves the industry.

Evaluation Plan

When designing an evaluation strategy for VFX Pipeline basic knowledge training, there are two main stakeholder groups and one future stakeholder group to consider. The immediate stakeholder groups are the learners themselves and the production teams with which they will work after the training is completed. The future stakeholder group is the Visual Effects Society (VES).

This course evaluation strategy is based on Kirkpatrick's 4 Levels of Evaluation Model. The decision to use this evaluation model is based on the need to prove the value of production training at the organizational level. The purpose of applying the four levels of evaluation model is to show how training professionals can create and demonstrate the organizational value of their training (Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Level 1 Evaluation:

Level One evaluation, meant to be “short-term observations and measurements that suggest that critical behaviors are on track to create a positive impact on the desired results” (Kirkpatrick, 2016, p, 6), for this course will be a post-course survey to be completed by both the students and mentors/industry experts to provide immediate feedback on their course experience and also to gather information about how to improve the course.

Level 2 Evaluation:

Level Two evaluation seeking to measure "the transfer of learning to behavior" (Kirkpatrick, 2016, p. 2), is conducted throughout the course via assignments and discussion questions. Feedback from the course facilitator, mentors and industry experts all serve this function. There will be no formal summative evaluation at the end of the course, rather students are given the freedom to explore ideas throughout the course as much or as little as they choose. Going back to the idea of learner-based inquiry, the motivation for learning in this course must come from the students themselves. They will be given proper written feedback for assignments within one week of the due date during the course with suggested areas for improvement.

Level 3 and 4 Evaluation:

Level Three and Four evaluation will depend on the cooperation of partner VFX studios. This is going to be a grey area and will require careful consultation with human resource departments so as to ensure that employee privacy regulations are respected.

Level Three evaluation, seeking to measure "the degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job" (Kirkpatrick, 2016, p. 6) will depend on the ability to question partner companies about course participants on-the-job performance. This level of evaluation may not be possible as to the reasons mentioned above. In the future, if the course is offered at a specific studio, it would provide more opportunity for Level Three evaluation.

The organizational goal for Level Four evaluation is to reduce the cost of training and maintaining production people at the company. This will take the form of higher employee retention. Having better trained individuals will allow for better job performance and a more seamless team integration. It will also lead to a reduced number of production people per team size. A more

experienced production person can have more artists in their department, handle larger sequences of work or work on more than one small show at a time. This level of evaluation also relies on the ability of partner organizations to share information. As this is not specific to any one person, rather it would be to gather general organizational data, there is a greater likelihood of companies' willingness to share information.

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Appendix A

Level 1 Evaluation – Post-course survey for learners

1. How did you hear about the course?
2. Did the course meet your expectations? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel better prepared to apply for a production job in Visual Effects? Why or why not?
4. What is something that you wanted to learn during the course but didn't?
5. What , if anything, did you learn during the course that surprised you?
6. What, if anything, would you change about your experience during the course?
7. Would you recommend this course to others? Why or why not?
8. Do you have any feedback for course facilitators and mentors?
9. Please add any additional thoughts on your experience in the course to help make it better next time.

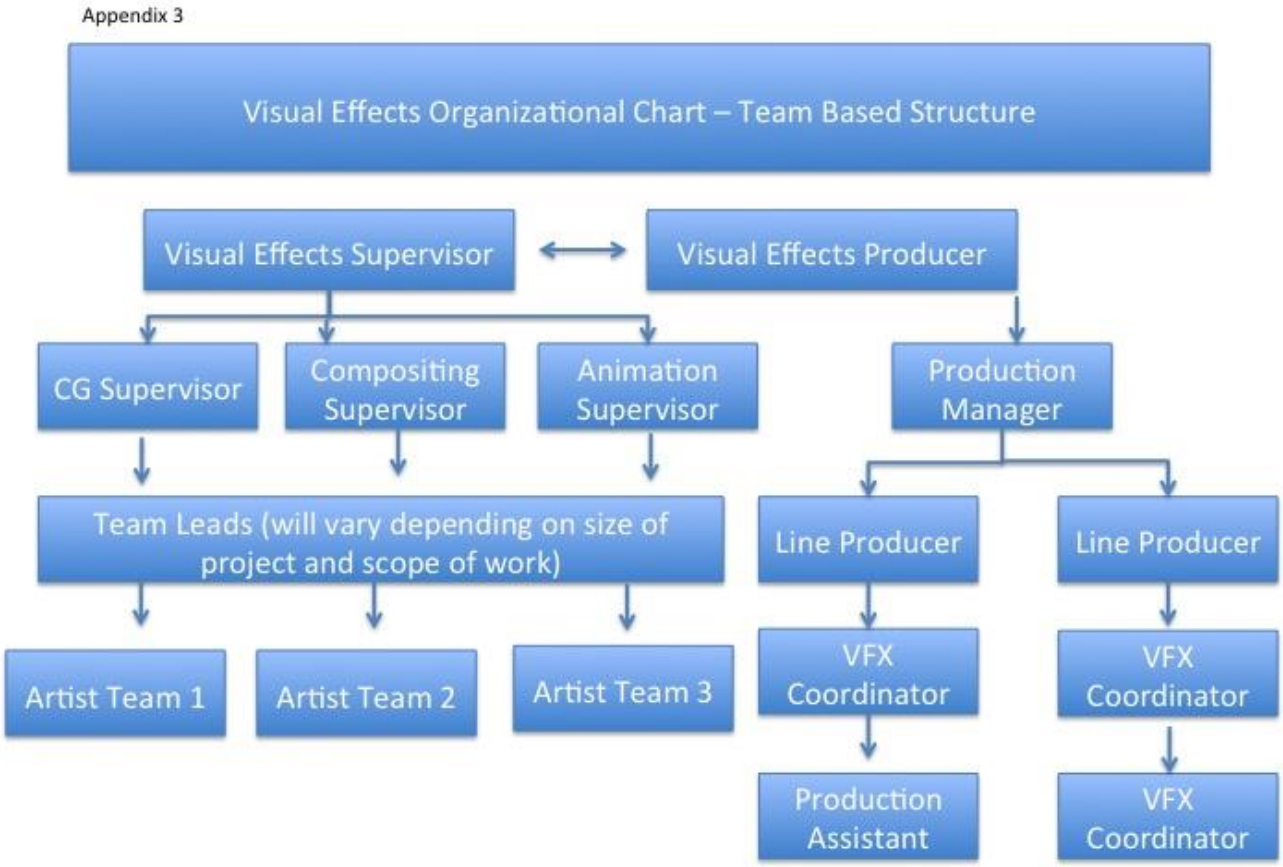
Appendix B

Level 1 Evaluation – Post-course survey for industry experts

1. Did you feel you were adequately prepared to be an industry expert for this course?
2. Were the expectations and requirements communicated clearly to you? Please elaborate on your answer.
3. Would you volunteer to be an industry expert again? Why or why not?
4. What was something that you thought worked well for learners during the course?
5. What, if anything, would you recommend to be changed about the course?
6. Do you think that course materials are appropriate to prepare someone for a job in production?
7. Please add any additional thoughts on your experience in the course to help make it better next time.

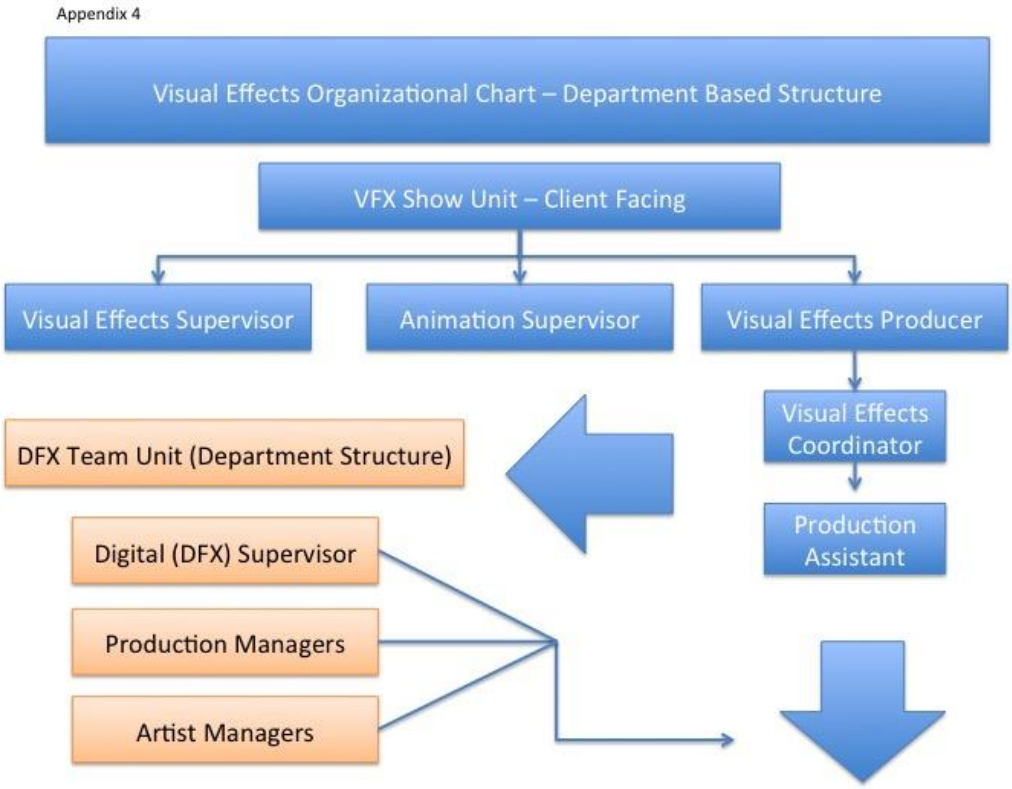
Appendix C

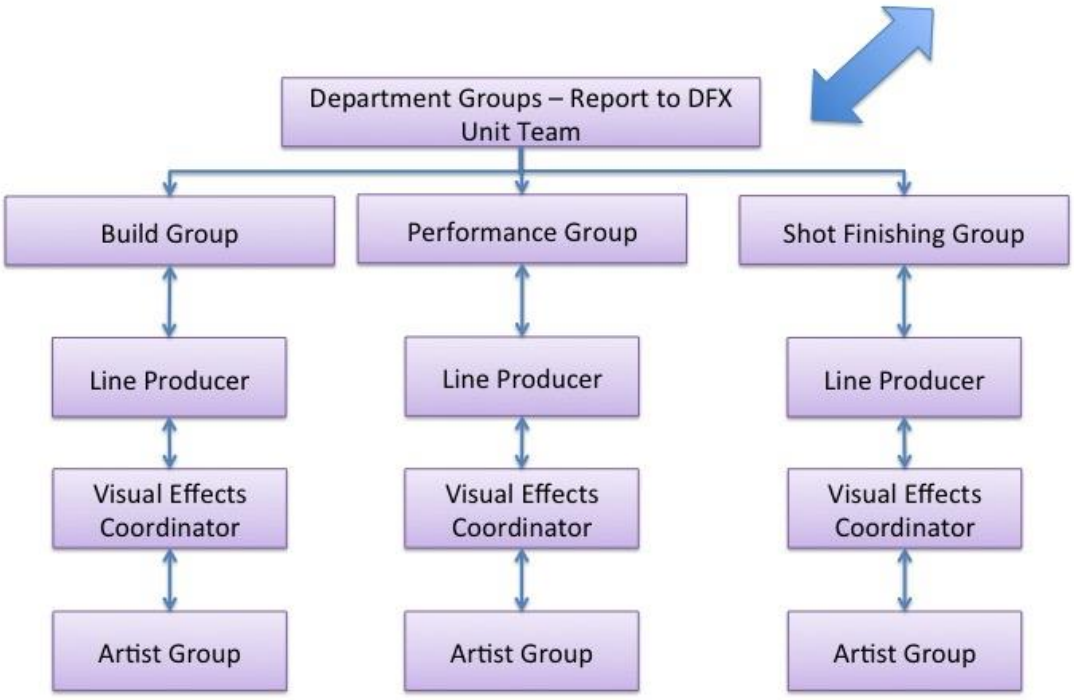
Visual Effects Organizational Chart – Team-based Structure



Appendix D

Visual Effects Organizational Chart – Department-based Structure




Department Groups – Report to DFX Unit Team
Build Group
Performance Group
Shot Finishing Group
Line Producer
Line Producer
Line Producer
Visual Effects Coordinator
Visual Effects Coordinator
Visual Effects Coordinator
Artist Group
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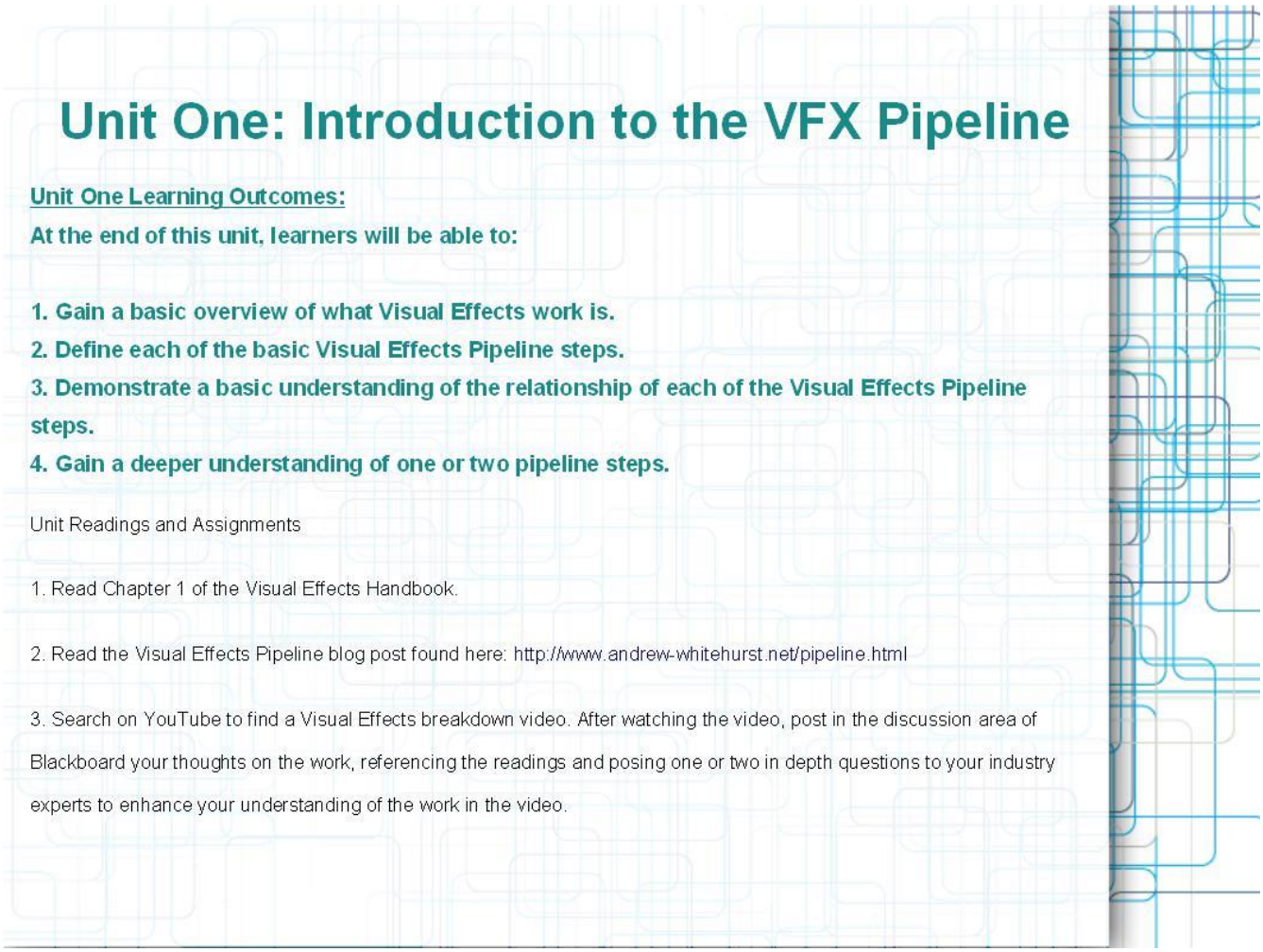
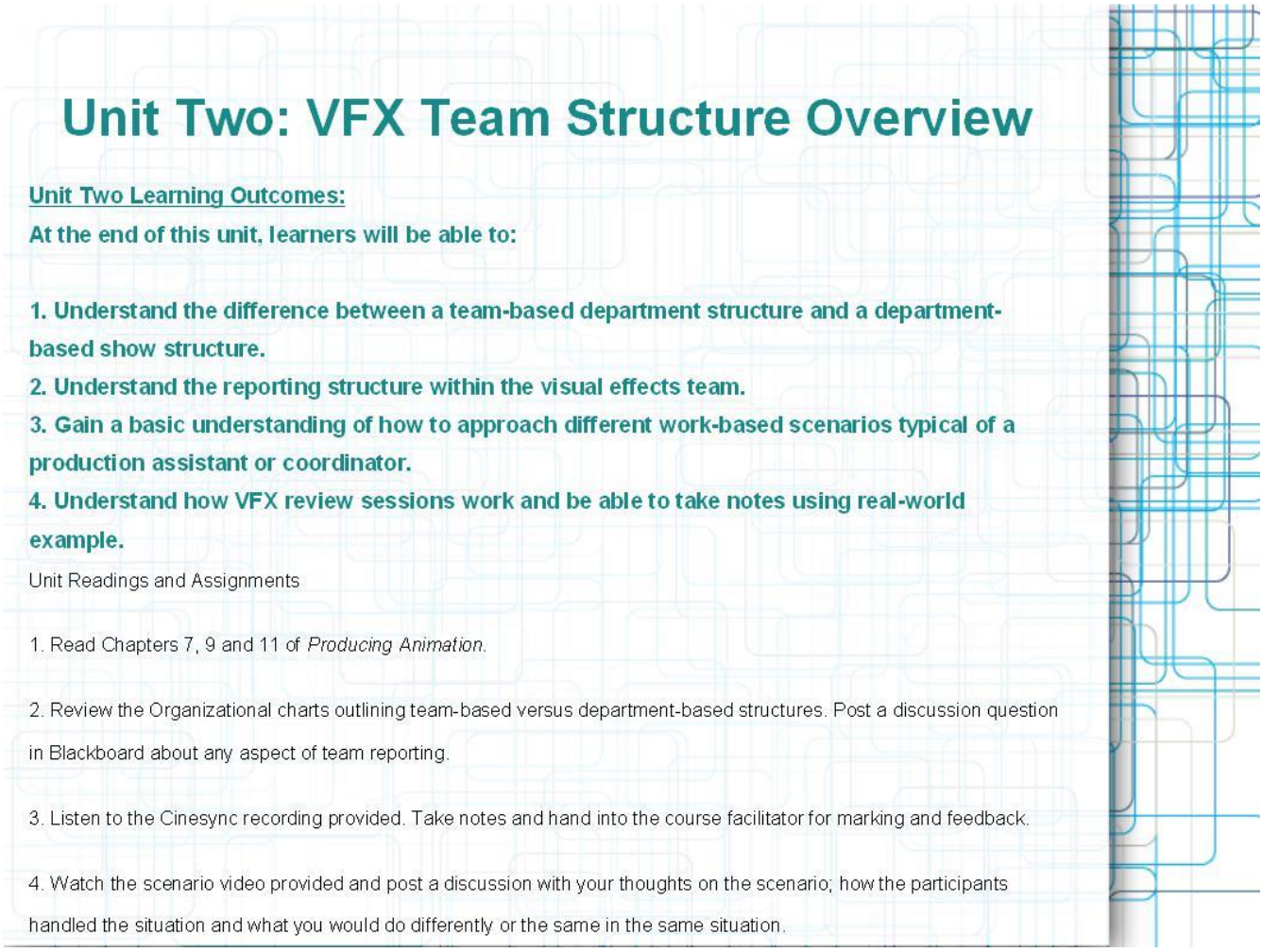
Appendix E

Sample Course Slides




Unit Two: VFX Team Structure Overview
Unit Two Learning Outcomes:
At the end of this unit, learners will be able to:
1. Understand the difference between a team-based department structure and a department-based show structure.
2. Understand the reporting structure within the visual effects team.
3. Gain a basic understanding of how to approach different work-based scenarios typical of a production assistant or coordinator.
4. Understand how VFX review sessions work and be able to take notes using real-world example.
Unit Readings and Assignments
1. Read Chapters 7, 9 and 11 of Producing Animation.
2. Review the Organizational charts outlining team-based versus department-based structures. Post a discussion question in Blackboard about any aspect of team reporting.
3. Listen to the Cinesync recording provided. Take notes and hand into the course facilitator for marking and feedback.
4. Watch the scenario video provided and post a discussion with your thoughts on the scenario; how the participants handled the situation and what you would do differently or the same in the same situation.