
ten suggestions to the film student

. . . retrieved from a cave in the holy mountain near Colonel By Canal in Ottawa in March, 1979, by Vaclav Taborsky. . .

1. Please realize what kind of jobs you will be applying for after finishing your studies. With great probability, you will function as an assistant to an experienced filmmaker. What kind of assignments will you be involved with? Most likely films for government agencies, sponsored films, commercials, educational films, maybe news. We recommend that at least part of your projects be in some of the above mentioned genres.

2. There are around 60-80 graduates from production-oriented film programs in Ontario every year. The competition will be tough. That means you should try to be the best, you should be the graduate who will find employment easily.

3. Why should the producers or managers select you? Because of your reliability, experience and ability. You can demonstrate your qualities by showing an interesting short film you have made. Producers do not have time to screen boring three-or-four reels made by scores of hitch-hiking geniuses.

4. As you should not fail in your job, you should start learning the discipline, overcoming your frustrations and biting the bullet now. You certainly can tell off your teachers, you may come late to the classes or skip them completely, if you wish; you can submit assignments and homework one day or one week past the deadline or not submit them at all, but do not expect to change overnight and suddenly become an excited third assistant to the second assistant on a pedestrian film. You will probably start far below the functions you performed during the last year of your studies.

5. The decisions of your teachers may not be popular all the time – they are not even meant to be. We want to simulate the real life situations which you will encounter later on, we want to let you know what it will be like to work for a producer who insists on having things done his way and will not discuss his instructions with you. You will have two choices – obey or quit.

6. We are going to discourage you from any kind of elitist or self-indulgent experiments. You can produce films by one filmmaker for one viewer after inheriting a large sum from your deceased uncle. You will be trained how to produce films which are needed in our country (see point 1). You are not likely to get an offer from the Civic Hospital to make a series of hazy, fuzzy images, edited in rhythm corresponding with Pascal's mathematical formula accompanied by Alban Berg's quintet for three flutes and two bazookas, in order to promote the treatment of patients at that hospital. Try those extravaganzas in your free time, with your own money.

7. You are supposed to take the full-time program in its entirety. There are more and less popular courses; you have to pass them all. You are not here just to use the equipment. The academic program consists of theory, practical application and production; you have to participate in all three parts. Even courses other than the specialized ones have to be complete: liberal art subjects, English or French, Photo Science, etc... If you do not like them, you will have a great opportunity to exercise your will, patience and determination. You

will need this experience in the years to come.

8. If the topics or scripts submitted by you are rejected, do not lose time flogging a dead horse. And never, NEVER blame somebody else for your failure. Of course your teacher or teachers may be wrong. Even your future employer can be wrong, but you have to do things the way he would like them. Analyze what your mistake was and then move swiftly on to look for another idea. Research it properly and write it in a better way than the previous one. Rewriting, changing, making new selections – that is just part of our business.

9. You cannot become a good filmmaker by drinking and partying with other film students – it is kind of a mental incest. The least you can do is to drink and party with normal people, bus drivers, tailors, farmers, local perverts, to learn other people's behaviour, dialogues and problems. You should know hundreds of characters and hundreds of little stories and store them in your mind for use later on.

10. If your involvement with film is serious, it should become your way of life. That means writing, writing and re-writing for script writers, meeting people and watching people. Taking pictures, drawing sketches, studying art, composition and colors for cinematographers. Listening to dialogues, sound effects, creating any sound effect artificially, listening to music, instruments, attending live concerts for sound men. Playing around, reshaping, experimenting in rhythm with any old footage you can lay your hands on for editors. Etc., etc. There are no Mozarts among you. Fortunately. The only way for you to succeed is hard work and enthusiasm.