

ArT5 Final Semester Evaluation report for Fall 2013 by Morten Søndergaard
and by student representative Morten Nielsen.

1. A general description of the semester.

The exhibition and project for ArT5 Fall 2013 was themed by the semester-theme – “Narrative and interaction”.

Overall, the semester landed on its feet and with the commitment of all groups to Winter Beat festival there was a general sense among the students that this was a good setting to work in.

Each project group was required to focus on doing narrative and interactive projects in the Winter Beat context, thus continuing on many of the trajectories from earlier semesters as well – including experience for the audience and the specificity of an urban/public setting.

The students generally found it difficult to combine the technological elements with the humanistic ones but, in the end, the combination acted out in some interesting ways in the semester projects.

2. What should the future coordinator and planning team be aware of?

Being the first semester I have coordinated on ArT there were several challenges, I found. Thus, I had to re-write the semester twice and lost the momentum of some very good and interesting collaboration-possibilities. Also, there were problems in getting a dialogue going between the teachers at the semester as well as between me and some of the semester teachers. For instance, two teachers I never actually met, and still have not met – and the dialogue attempts on my part was met by – well – disinterest. This was a huge frustration to me and I find the whole setup completely un-motivating for the creative possibilities there, at ArT.

Also, the semester theme is a bit of a conundrum. The progression from previous semesters is/was uncertain and not much was handed down from earlier semesters. The leap from sound and public space technologies to narratives is huge... and my attempt to direct this based on my professional experience was not approved by study board.

For the above reasons, it was difficult for me to invest my professional competencies into the semester – and I felt I could only offer 50% of my capacity for that reason.

My own evaluation of the Winter Beat context is that, whereas it is fine to be in a real-life context, it does not challenge the students enough, and more importantly not challenge them in the right ways, to really be something I would recommend should be a tradition to do on 5th. The exhibition and examination-planning was also made difficult because of this.

In future, it would be very important for the coordinator to handle these issues early on – even though I began planning the semester in March already this proved to be too late.

3. What should the lecturers be aware of?

Standard delivery rules apply to lectures and lecturers as well (as we require from the students when they present). Focused slides that break up information into legible chunks, and take the students step by step through the processes are needed. Too much text on slides does not work. Some students have more difficulty with theory, others have more difficulty with more technical courses like programming etc. Study groups where those students who have a natural aptitude and can learn by teaching to those who are not so adept should be encouraged in classes where it is obvious that some students, who despite attending and wanting to do well, are falling behind. This should be something lecturers are aware of and discussion with semester coordinator would assist this so groups and support are set up from the beginning.

4. What must the department and service personnel be aware of?

Some of our students have a sense of isolation and not being important or part of the larger university life. We need to encourage activities that ensure they join in with other parts of the university.

5. What should the Study Board act upon?

More discussion on content and progression, and much more conscious cohesion between humanistic and mediaology elements. This requires dialogue! Study board must ensure this dialogue takes place.

Also, the study board itself – its members – need to be clearer in their ideas and more open for discussing them. It is obvious we need a transdisciplinary framing of the studies. We should work to achieve that more. A number of students do not use their time to study, but to party and drink. Even come to classes drunk sometimes.

Also, this is a recurring problem: Some students are there for the financial support. It really does not help morale and it undermines the importance of the study and the work of the active students, if those who do not even turn up still pass.

One important issue is for coordinators and lecturers working together to address coherence with semester theme throughout courses. This was the most difficult thing to achieve on 5th (it was not achieved).