



In summer of 2017 we set up the Digital Lab at Root Division in San Francisco and conducted a series of exciting graphic design workshops for middle and high school youth.

As designers who were new to teaching we created this framework for fellow comrades. We hope this will guide you in creating an engaging workshop and enjoying the journey to get there.

Hack it, build on it and make it your own!

**How do we get the right people together
to make this workshop happen?**



Radical Collaboration

Everyone on the team and everyone you meet has something unique to contribute. Invite their thoughts and listen deeply. Learn new skills from each other, pool ideas and try and be in the same room while you do.

Everyone Leads

All team members must take on leadership roles (eg. Communication Manager, Design Lead, Project Manager) This allows everyone to be equally engaged and invested. Each lead can start meetings by updating the team about their domain.

Are You On The Same Page?

Make a team agreement and have frequent check-ins to ensure that team members are on the same page. Share your feelings and expectations openly. Resolve conflicts quickly and collaboratively. The most innovative teams have high emotional intelligence so make time to build strong relationships.

Celebrate The Small Wins

Celebrate the small wins, it keeps everyone motivated. Don't forget to have fun, laugh a lot and toss around those wild ideas. A happy wholesome team will attract good energy and you'll start noticing the universe conspiring to make good things happen for you.

**How do we make sure that everyone
has the same vision as us?**



Align to a Shared Vision

Get your team together to answer these prompts and put your responses up where you can see it everyday. Revisit it and update it regularly. It will constantly evolve.

5 W'S- What is it? Why are you doing it? Who is it for? How will it happen? Where will it happen?

What it is/what it is not - Define these for the project, it will help you make the right decisions later.

Create a Culture of Helpfulness

The secret sauce is to build genuine relationships. Have an open mind when meeting new people and organizations for partnerships and be respectful of their systems and dynamics. Volunteer to help them and don't be afraid to ask for help. Ask them for feedback, it gives them an opportunity to get involved and be your sponsor to their organization. Take initiative whenever you can and acknowledge the time and effort they are giving you.

Communication is Everything

Be in regular communication with all stakeholders and try to meet in person as often as possible. Make sure everyone is aligned about their roles on the initiative. Be honest and direct, and invite their inputs so that they are involved in the decision making process.

Go Where the Energy is

At the end of the day your enthusiasm isn't enough and finding the right partners is crucial. Find the people who believe in you, respect you and are invested in your initiative.

What goes into creating an engaging physical environment for creative projects?



Make it an Experience

Design your workshop as an end-to-end experience. What are the students going to be thinking, feeling and doing from the moment they enter to the moment they leave. What will they remember? Creating a journey map will help.

Think About Everything

You can get creative with inspiring posters, art, LED lights and also decorate with projects the students create. Plan for accessibility, the location of the workshop, transport to venue, bathrooms. Move tables around to create more collaborative spaces and have wall space to put up work for critique.

Prototype the Flow

Get familiar with the environment before the day. Does everyone know where the supplies are? Test the technology: wi-fi, projectors, computers, printers, scanners and charging points. How will people move around through activities? It's helpful to have a prominent place to put up the agenda for the day. If it's your first time facilitating a class, do a practice aloud trial run.

How do we put together the actual workshop?



Create a Curriculum

Don't try to develop your curriculum from scratch, build on what's out there and tailor it to inspire and open new roads for the students who turn up at the workshop.

Make a list of skills you want students to learn by the end of the workshop. Decide what age group you're designing for and find out what motivates them and what they're interested in.

Plan it all out, Down to the Last Minute

Create a detailed schedule, put in buffers for things that don't go according to plan.

Breaks are important and so are yummy (healthy) snacks.

Have a good mix of individual and team activities.

Always be prepared with backup activities and a plan B.

Making it Happen

Outreach is critical. How will students hear about it? Make posters, event pages and sign-up forms. Find the right people and places to share it with.

If it's a free workshop, be sure to emphasize it.

Take pictures and document all along. Share these with your partners, students and others involved. Pictures of happy engaged children are always a delight. However, don't forget to get parents to sign a photo consent form before you do this.

How do we facilitate the workshop in a fun and engaging way?



Interacting with Youth

Start the workshop with some ground rules

Get everyone including facilitators to wear a name tag with pronouns. It's always best to address students by their names.

Warm-up activities are excellent to get everyone comfortable and in the mood to be creative. Speak their language. Don't talk down or up to them, treat them like adults. Be assertive, you are here to guide them. There will be students who want things done their way. Explain to them why that won't be possible. Have your eyes and ears open all the time. If you sense a conflict, address it immediately. It is most important that students feel safe in this environment. Try and interact with parents when they drop their kids or pick them up. It builds trust for everyone involved.

Who Teaches, Who Doesn't

Split the team into facilitators (instructs and directs) and Ninjas (work with the student teams as a team member). This will reduce confusion for the students as to who to approach for what.

Empower Them

Make the students feel seen and heard. Invite them to speak. Ask them what their favorite part of the project was.

Nudge them to experiment. There are no right and wrong answers, every opinion is valid.

Give them feedback that builds their confidence.

Pay attention to everyone, especially the quieter ones.

Don't compare people, no winners and losers here.

Give them simple and clear instructions and check with them if they've understood.

How do we measure success and iterate upon our workshop?



Learn and Reflect

End each workshop with feedback sessions- this could be feedback forms, critiques or an open discussion.

Have a team debrief and reflect soon after conducting a workshop. Be sure to type out notes as verbal communication will be soon forgotten. You can have an online google doc dedicated to this.

What is Success? How will we Measure it?

Use the exercise prompt to create your exercise metrics. As a team write down answers to the prompt :

We will be successful if.....

We have failed if.....

Then write down how you will measure each of these.

Make sure you have both qualitative and quantitative points of measurement.

Experiment

Always have a prototyping mindset and look at your initiative as a work in progress. When you are stuck, try something new. Ask the students what they would like to learn.

How Will it Live On?

Think about how your work will live on and how you can pass on your insights. Can you train others to do the same thing. Can you join forces with other doing similar work? This framework is what we made to pass on our insights. Change it, build on it, make it your own.