The background of the page is a collage of two images. The top half shows a video conference in progress, with two large windows displaying participants: a man on the left and a woman on the right. Below them are smaller windows showing other participants. The bottom half shows an art gallery or exhibition space with people walking through a doorway. The overall tone is professional and creative.

Discovering The Post-Digital Art School

Finding new ways to
prepare students for a
meaningful career in
today's creative industries

A report by Fred Deakin
and Charlotte Webb

Featuring contributions from:
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Forewords

When I visited one of Fred Deakin's workshops for the first time I saw multidisciplinary student teams developing their own digital products and services in an agile way reminiscent of the professional design studios that I have been part of. These students were using all the tools that they had been given as part of their creative education and applying them collaboratively and rapidly to generate their own social innovation projects. Today's technology was a vital part of all of their projects (as well as the workshop's teaching structure) but this technology didn't dictate their outcomes.

This flexible, agile way of working is now the standard for professional design and it points to the future for creative education. Digital transformation is inevitable for every sector: you will either digitally transform your business or you will be replaced by one that has. When this transformation happens properly it is messy, hectic, and produces results no-one could predict, which sounds just like my Foundation course. With their famously maverick spirit, Britain's art schools are surely a natural home for this kind of disruptive behaviour.

Education is long overdue a digital transformation and, while most people look to MOOCs for inspiration, these kind of intensively innovative workshops feel like a much more likely solution. I'm glad that UAL is supporting this kind of bold experimentation and am looking forward to seeing what positive disruption emerges from future iterations of Fred's workshops.

Ben Terrett

Governor, University of the Arts London

Group Design Director, The Co-operative Group

For some time the creative industries have been going through a radical and unprecedented period of evolution as they become increasingly affected by a shift from analogue to digital methodologies. One visible result is that the overlap between various disciplines has been steadily dissolving, which has presented both challenges and new opportunities for industry and education.

This shift to multi-disciplinary practice has been brought about by the all pervasive digital tools which, as well as expanding our capabilities, have radically changed the ways in which we work. We are increasingly sharing a common, portable platform, and using similar tools to communicate, manage workflow, experiment and execute work, thus enabling an unprecedented sharing of skills across disciplines. Not only are we given insight into how other creatives work and what they work with (before desktop publishing who other than graphic designers knew what a typeface was?) but work has naturally become more collaborative.

The new tools we now use also allow for faster trialling and prototyping of ideas, so design flow becomes more iterative, and is more able to absorb valuable input at crucial development points from diverse sources in a cyclical and non-linear way. Combine this with a rapid prototyping ethos, further enhance that with the multi-locational interconnectivity of the Internet and you have a creative workspace, part local and part regional, that was previously unavailable to us.

This new digital space is where Fred Deakin's collaborative workshops have been developed and where they have flourished. He is pioneering an innovative and wholly contemporary ways of bringing students together across disciplines, across faculties and across universities as a logical and direct response to this new landscape. The outcomes, in parallel with the expectations, may be healthily unpredictable, but the approach is one which has rapid response designed into it from the outset. The surprise is that few other art schools or universities seem quite so alive to this opportunity to define the future of design education, giving this project an opportunity to set new standards.

Prof Malcolm Garrett RDI

Ambassador, Manchester School of Art

Co-curator, Design Manchester



Overview

This report describes a series of workshops delivered during Fred Deakin's Professorship of Interactive Digital Arts at University of the Arts London from 2014 to 2016. These workshops explored new ways of teaching professional creative practice in a post-digital world where the internet and its accompanying technological devices have been fully assimilated and are ever present in all of our lives. The intention is that this report will help arts educators and others interested in the creative process consider how to deliver their work in more agile ways. For arts educators, there are practical and reflective insights about creating a set of digital tools to enhance students' experiences and equip them for the creative industries. We also offer a series of recommendations about how this agile way of educating students can be adapted and repurposed for other curricula. For creative professionals there are insights into how we are preparing our students for their future careers and examples of how other industry experts have supported us in this endeavour. For those interested in the creative process we have made the students' journey from individual to team player more visible, and explored how digital tools are facilitating creative practice in new ways.

There are several different voices in this report, which has been produced by a cross-disciplinary team. This process reflects the collaborative approach of the workshops, and as a result we feel it has resulted in something that is greater than the sum of its parts. As the driving force behind the workshops, Fred's personal voice is front and centre, but the report also includes perspectives from students, workshop staff, workshop producers and industry experts.



Introduction

When I took the job of Professor of Interactive Digital Arts at UAL in 2014 I had a very clear idea of what I wanted to achieve: to empower emerging generations of arts graduates to confidently engage with the digital space and create their own futures. I've had an extremely varied career working in many sectors of the creative industries and have initiated, developed and delivered many ground-breaking and successful projects: on the whole they were all produced through team-work by teams of people with diverse skills who cared deeply about what they were working on. As a result I believe passionately in the power of collaboration.

I also believe that in this post-digital world, where we assume continual access to the internet's functionality as a given and game-changing innovations are emerging daily as a result, today's graduates are potentially far more powerful than my peers and I were back in the nineties, despite the undisputable harshness of the current economic and political situation for young creative talent. Digital gives them access to tools, resources and audiences in a way previous generations could never imagine: it is very possible for them to create projects that have the potential to radically and rapidly change our world without any kind of external support. Unfortunately awareness of this power does not seem much in evidence in the majority of current art school students who seem more comfortable remaining digital consumers: empowering new generations of creative talent to confidently engage with and innovate in the digital space is clearly critical if we are to maintain our country's current international cultural leadership, with all the accompanying economic benefits this leadership brings.

The last of my personal beliefs that has informed this project's evolution is that creative talent can and should be directed towards positive social change. Combining this agenda with a personal creative practice does not imply any kind of compromise; rather, discovering an appropriate purpose, when truly integrated with individual passions and skills, can be a profound and powerfully transformative experience for students. The current boom in digital social innovation ('tech for good') and social entrepreneurship points to a similar set of beliefs emerging in

today's creative industries, possibly as a positive response to the economic and political situation I referred to previously. As a result I have integrated this agenda into these workshops and steered students towards developing appropriate ideas. Business and commercial skills are still very much required and encouraged: after all, a truly sustainable social enterprise has to be commercially viable, especially in the current political climate, and must be communicated and delivered in a highly professional way if it is to have any chance of success. But positive change has been a natural context for these workshops and I believe that this orientation has benefited all involved, from students and staff to experts and audience.

Art schools have always been exemplars of a 'learning by doing' model: giving students direct experience of cross-disciplinary collaboration within a contemporary digital workspace in order to create their own self-initiated social enterprise projects is the strategy I have been exploring, and the workshop model described in this report is the result. I have only been able to explore this strategy because of the unusual role that UAL has been bold enough to give me. I have had only a base level of academic responsibilities: unlike my colleagues I have had no course to run and no students directly assigned to me. Free of the pressure of immediate deliverables I have been able to consider what a 'year zero' arts education might look like if we were to be conceiving it completely anew, starting from where we are right now in this post-digital world. And of course I am not the only person exploring this area. Alongside the many UAL colleagues from whom I have learnt enormously, I have also been inspired by the D School Institute of Design at Stanford, Matt Ward's Design course at Goldsmiths, Dave Crow's Unit X at Manchester School of Art, Hyper Island and Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design, to name just a few.

The term 'post-digital' implies that we have arrived, and yet this digital transformation is far from over. As Nik Roope, founder and director of leading UK digital agency Poke says, if anyone tells you they know what the digital world will look like in six months from now you can happily ignore anything else they might say, as they are almost certainly a charlatan. Change is the only constant and this brings its own challenges

to all sectors, not just education. In response to this ongoing disruption the digital sector has developed a new set of 'agile' tools and although I would hesitate to model education entirely on industry practice, I believe that there is much to be learnt from this new approach. This project has itself been an exercise in iterative agile design, a minimum viable product that has been tested on a series of focus groups in full battle conditions and come back bruised but triumphant, with much news from the front. I hope that these findings will be useful for all involved in creativity in our post-digital world, whether professionally or educationally.

Fred Deakin, June 2016

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#1 Into The Maze

The Workshop Experience





Workshop Evolution

I've delivered three very different iterations of this workshop so far. The format has progressed steadily towards the digital: once a real world prototype had been established I felt confident enough to explore more radical methods of delivery and their success has prompted further experimentation.

Version One : Face to Face

The first iteration of this workshop was held over two weeks in April 2014, and unlike subsequent workshops the twenty participants were all in the room with me and my three fellow workshop staff. It was hosted by the London advertising agency Mother who generously contributed a studio space, staff expertise, facilities and resources. Discussions with various experts, including Clare Reddington at Bristol's Watershed and Alie Rose at Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design, as well as several previous experiments on a smaller scale had shown me the importance of running the workshop for a fortnight. Students needed to experience the whole lifecycle of conceiving, developing and delivering an ambitious project for themselves to embed this learning; generating projects of quality as well as delivering the teaching material necessary to establish collaborative methods just wasn't possible in a shorter period.

This was the first fully fledged version of the workshop experience and consequently I was only one or two steps ahead of the students most of the time, often collating the next day's material the night before and generally operating in 'seat of the pants' mode. Nonetheless the results were very encouraging: student feedback was excellent, the projects were of a high quality and the participants seemed to have gone through a genuine transformation of their working methods. In my opinion several factors were responsible for this transformation:

1 Simulating a professional environment

Imposing tight deadlines in a full-time immersive environment simulated a professional creative industry context which was very different from university. In this case the workshop was physically situated within a leading creative company rather than the usual university environment which increased this impact even more.

This positive culture shock caused the students to raise their game dramatically: they were confronted at first hand with a highly desirable potential future scenario for their own careers post graduation. Being situated in close proximity to professional practitioners busy in the thick of their daily workload provided abundant role models for how the students would need to behave should they wish to return to this environment permanently. The workshop staff also embodied these professional industry practices within the workshop itself as further examples.

2 A clear structure delivered with integrity

A strong, explicitly stated workshop structure allowed students to trust us and each other. Punctuality, clarity, timetabled activity and abundant staff support all helped the students relax into the vulnerable state required to collaborate creatively.

3 Self-initiated projects generated collaboratively

Rather than being given client briefs, students generated their own project ideas to address issues that they personally cared about: their motivation was greatly increased and they developed more of an entrepreneurial mind-set as a result. These project ideas were generated collaboratively in group sessions, not initiated by one individual, and participation in their subsequent delivery was voluntary: again, this established 'buy-in', motivation and partnership.

4 A social enterprise context

Although students were encouraged to develop their own project ideas freely, they were asked to focus on delivering positive social change. This agenda was extremely broad and it was made clear that delivering a great artistic experience that uplifts an audience was deemed as valuable as addressing isolation in an ageing population. Nonetheless, this non-commercial requirement was made an essential component of all projects.

Aside from the obvious inherent merits of social entrepreneurship projects, this strategy also avoided the problem of selfishness. In previous collaborative workshops I had observed students withdrawing or becoming aggressive at the point when their group had just developed a project idea with the potential for commercial success: suddenly questions of ownership and future financial reward reared their ugly head, putting paid

to the generosity necessary for good collaborative practice. Clearly stating the primary goal as positive social change rather than commercial success helped make this possibility far more unlikely.

5 Collaboration with industry

Daily pitching to external experts (in this case members of Mother's staff) brought a 'reality check' to the projects. Students were extremely keen to impress these professionals and to prove that their projects had genuine worth in the real world. These pitches culminated in a public pitch event to all Mother's staff alongside other industry professionals and UAL staff and students.

6 Reflection and integration

Pausing properly for feedback and reflection on the final day before returning to their courses helped students articulate to themselves and each other how they had been transformed, and increased the chances of integration when they resumed their normal work routines.

Version Two: Introducing a digital element

The second workshop, entitled Collabology, was held in April 2015 at Somerset House, home to a thriving creative community with a strong focus on social enterprise which provided an excellent context for the workshop agenda. Several members of this community came in as industry experts to lecture and give students feedback and Somerset House were (and continue to be) very generous with their support.

For this version I secured funding from the creative industry skills body Creative Skillset to develop a digital element of the workshop. The first workshop delivered a great student experience but it clearly wasn't scaleable due to the substantial resources necessary to deliver this experimental prototype. Developing an online version was an obvious but challenging next step for exploring how the workshop model could be extended to a larger group of students and thus made financially viable for more widespread use.

With the enthusiastic partnership of Manchester and Falmouth Schools of Art we enrolled twelve students from each faculty to take part. These students would be working online in real time from their homes and colleges in Falmouth and Manchester alongside the twenty UAL students that were in the classroom with me. My team and I visited both locations to meet these participants and establish their full commitment: we ran a couple of exercises to give them a flavour of the workshop and then helped them install the necessary software on their devices (in this case Slack and Fuze). Doing this face to face was extremely useful, as individual technological issues could be dealt with quickly and easily. (Having said that, in Falmouth the entire university's internet connection went down from just after we arrived until an hour before we left, which was a truly nail-biting experience!)

Designing this first hybrid version of the workshop took many hours of preparation. The workshop staff were increased from four to seven full-time members and the majority of our time was spent implementing the new untested digital element, learning enormous amounts in the process. It was also the first time we had employed graduates from the previous workshop as staff: two of the workshop team (Matthew and Rebecca, who also returned as more senior staff for the third workshop) had taken the first workshop themselves as students. Their unique insight into the current participants' experience proved invaluable and inspired me to develop this 'co-creation' concept further in later iterations.

Version Three: A fully blended model

The most recent version of the workshop was held in January 2016. After a launch generously hosted by the Digital Catapult Centre we then returned to Somerset House, this time to the 'shabby-chic' environment of their River Rooms gloriously situated on the Thames but (when we first arrived) without any electricity or heating. This time we were working with exclusively UAL students (hence this workshop title, Modual) and required a staff team of thirteen, eight of whom were graduates from previous workshops. Where we had previously kept the online and face to face modes of delivery separate, here we rotated the students between these two modes: we divided them into four 'pods' of fifteen and scheduled one group to come into Somerset House each day while the others worked remotely. Thus for this version of the workshop the majority of participation took place online.

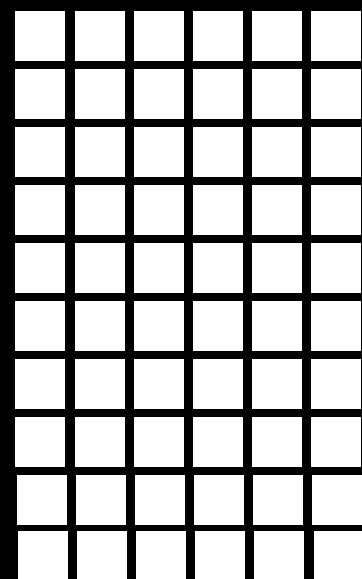
One obvious future possibility is to run the workshop as an entirely digital experience. As a teacher I'm personally reluctant to lose my face-to-face 'audience' but this option clearly needs to be investigated. Regardless of my opinion the evidence seems compelling: on the day that we decided to give the students a free choice whether to take part in person or online, I entered the Somerset House classroom to be greeted by just one student (thanks Zippy!) So perhaps we're there already.

But before we begin to explore next steps, let's step back and look at the experience, evolution and delivery of this third workshop, the current expression of all our work to date.

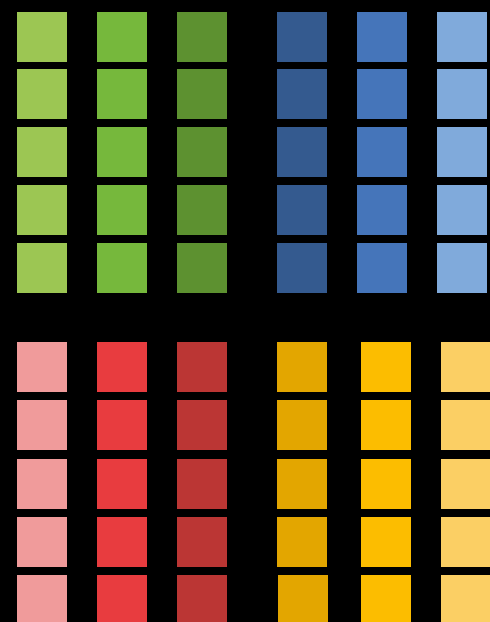


Student experience: collaboration

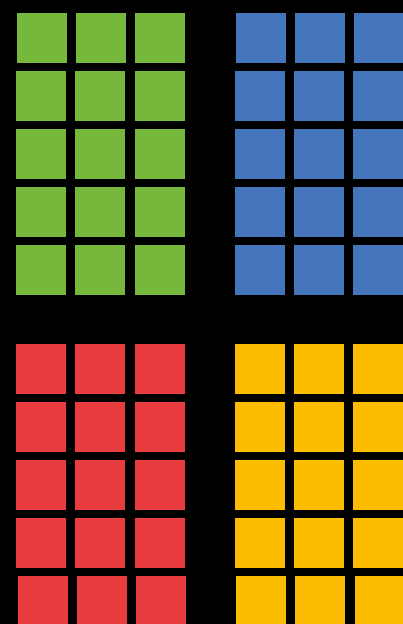
Launch Event
All students together



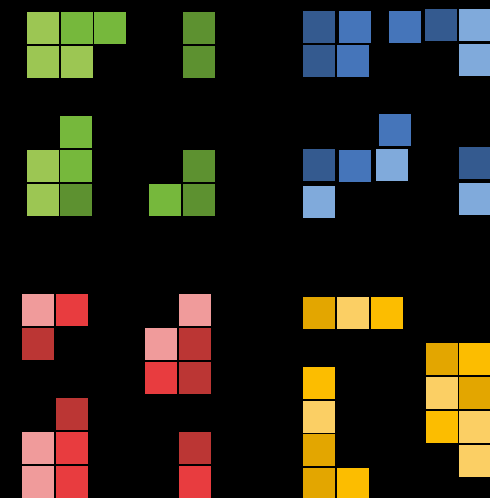
Day Two and Three
Pods each sub-divide into three “client groups” based on common interests.



Day One
Students divide into four ‘pods.’

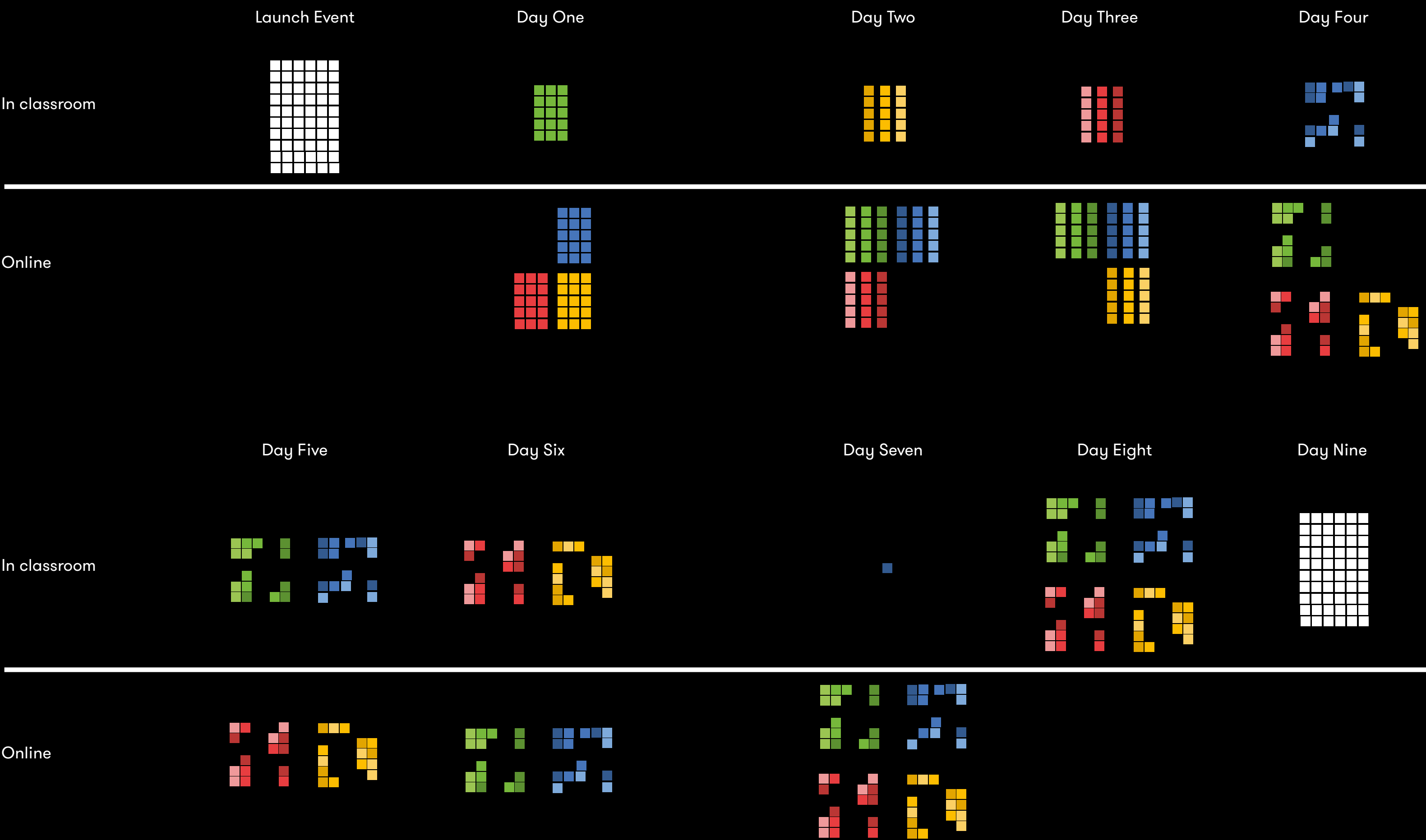


Day Four and onwards
After briefly uniting as individuals, students then re-divide into various final project teams.





Student experience: on and offline



Workshop Structure

The workshop was scheduled carefully over two weeks: the first week focussed on preparatory exercises and lectures and as a result was tightly timetabled, while week two was all about production. Below is a day by day breakdown of the various activities.

DAY 1

09:15 - 09:45 Team briefing

09:45 - 10:00 Participants to arrive

09:50 - 10:00 Attendance check

10:00 - 11:30 Introduction + Pecha Kucha

11:30 - 12:00 Break

12:00 - 13:00 Explore your element

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:15 Affinity mapping

15:15 - 15:45 Break

15:45 - 17:00 Expert presentation

17:00 - 17:15 Participants leave

17:15 - 17:45 Team debrief

17:45 Core team scheduling

DAY 2

09:15 - 09:45 Team briefing

09:45 Participants to arrive

09:50 Attendance check

10:00 - 11:15 Vision setting

11:15 - 11:45 Break

11:45 - 13:00 Brainstorm

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:15 Coloured hats + Moodboard

15:15 - 15:45 Break

15:45 - 17:00 Expert presentation

17:00 - 17:15 Participants leave

17:15 - 17:45 Team debrief

17:45 Core team scheduling

DAY 3

09:15 - 09:45 Team briefing

09:45 Participants arrive

09:50 Attendance check

10:00 - 11:15 Moodboarding

11:15 - 11:45 Break

11:45 - 13:00 Pitch ideas

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:15 Vote analysis – Briefing on what to do!

15:15 - 15:45 Break

15:45 - 16:15 Expert presentation 1

16:15 - 17:00 Expert presentation 2

17:00 - 17:15 Participants leave

17:15 - 17:45 Team debrief

17:45 Core team scheduling

DAY 4

09:15 - 09:45 Team briefing

09:45 Participants to arrive

09:50 Attendance check

10:00 - 11:15 Projects

11:15 - 11:45 Break

11:45 - 13:00 Project work

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:15 Mentoring

15:15 - 15:45 Break

15:45 - 17:00 Mentoring

17:00 - 17:15 Participants leave

17:15 - 17:45 Team debrief

17:45 Core team scheduling

DAY 6

AM
Project work

PM
Expert crits

Preserve your memory

DAY 5

AM
Project work

PM
Expert crits

DAY 7

AM
Project work

PM
Expert crits





Taught Elements

The first week of the workshop included a number of taught elements facilitated by Fred, such as short lectures and exercises designed to prepare students for collaboration. This week was highly organised, with planned activities built into the timetable for every hour of each day. The intention was to begin the workshop with a strong structure that gave the students momentum and pushed them through any initial hesitation, and then slowly withdraw this structure to allow them to take ownership and initiative for themselves.

We are going to push you. The structure will work you quite hard: it may feel uncomfortable at times, but no pain, no gain! You might fall on your face a couple of times, but that's OK, because you're in a safe environment, so dare to be bold.

Fred

Structured exercises helped students to get to know each other (and themselves), put them in a pro-active and creative frame of mind, and gave them practical skills for idea generation and teamwork. Examples included: giving every student a slot in a Pecha Kucha to show their work and introduce themselves to each other; the classic 'Yes... and!' improvisational exercise where small teams build on a random idea in turn without criticism or restraint; asking students to consider themselves as 'T-shaped designers' (IDEO's model of specialism versus generalism) and then discussing and refining each other's T-shaped profile in pairs before capturing it in writing and possibly presenting it to the group. Fred designed and compiled these exercises drawing on texts such as Dave Gray and Sunni Brown's Gamestorming and Jean Paul Flintoff's How to Change the World. He also drew on experience of leading a creative team at his design studio Airside, participating in various professional development workshops, and many years as an Associate Lecturer at Central Saint Martins.

One particularly successful exercise used the Six Thinking Hats model, adapted from lateral thinker Edward de Bono. The premise is that when

developing ideas in a group, it can be useful for all members to adopt the same point of view and discuss the idea from there, rather than battling it out from different points of view. The six hats represent different modes of thinking, four of which were used in this exercise:

Yellow	A positive, joyful, happy hat that says 'this idea is great and here's why'
Black	A miserable, anti-everything hat that says 'this idea is terrible and here's why'
Green	A random, leftfield hat that says 'let's throw in some thing unexpected and see what happens'
Red	An intuitive hat that says 'how do I feel about the idea?'

The hats exercise was introduced once students had arrived at 3 potential project ideas. They worked in small groups to apply each hat in turn for one minute to each of their ideas. In the final feedback, several students said this exercise was the one of the exercises they'd most enjoyed from the workshop:

Really loved this exercise. I feel that sometime we hold back in fear of hurting a person's feelings or even restricting compliments, but using hats as a device to vent your opinion worked really great. Negative feedback didn't feel so personal after that.

Thinking hats!!!!!! I guess each of team member usually has one of the hats on. I tend to be rather excited about ideas. It was great to try different moods.

Loved the brainstorm and thinking hats bit. Felt like being a kid again.

The 'T-shaped designer' model also seemed to resonate. By the end of the workshop, most students could add at least one skill to the cross-bar of their 'T', and were clearer about their core field of 'mastery' as well as their more general abilities. This process of becoming more aware of their existing skills plus the direct experience of developing these skills increased student confidence and their willingness to experiment.



“

We are going to push you. The structure will work you quite hard: it may feel uncomfortable at times, but no pain, no gain! You might fall on your face a couple of times, but that's OK, because you're in a safe environment, so dare to be bold.

Fred, Workshop Leader

”





Context

Alongside these exercises, Fred introduced a series of theoretical models to give a contextual justification to the activities students were being asked to undertake. These models included the Design Council's *double diamond*, the concept of structural versus generative energy (aka right brain/left brain, yin and yang or Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast And Slow* dichotomy) and Eric Ries' *Lean Thinking* pyramid of vision - strategy - product, and emphasis on rapid prototyping.

This theoretical material was complemented by a series of daily lectures from various industry practitioners, showing case studies and describing how they had succeeded in making the transition from student to professional. These took place at the end of the day when the students were tired from their activities and thus open and ready for input.

In addition to this explicit theory, the design of the workshop's structure was informed by Fred's 'four levels of creative digital engagement' model included here in Appendix Three. This model suggests that our relationship with the internet as creative practitioners can be seen to move from a relatively passive consumer role through more complex content-generating and collaborative states to a programming level. This perspective suggests that it is the middle two levels (using off-the-shelf digital tools or collaborating in cross-disciplinary teams to generate complex digital content) that have the most potential for transforming students' practice and are currently most neglected. Consequently the workshop concentrated on leading participants into these two levels.

Developing Project Briefs

As the first week progressed, the strong structure of the first few days was gradually withdrawn: the timetable included longer creative sessions and the exercises themselves became more expansive. Students were invited to connect with their passions and then see where they overlapped with their desire for positive change. Each pod of fifteen students was then split into three smaller 'client groups' of five, each group having a common interest or theme, determined via an affinity mapping exercise.

The client groups were asked to identify their area of common interest, present it to their wider pod and then to brainstorm as many ideas as possible for projects that would create positive impact in this area. The students were given two metrics for 'success' in their brainstorming efforts: firstly, quantity of ideas and secondly 'craziness' of ideas, with the most successful team in each category receiving public acknowledgement at the end of the process. These metrics were intended to remove pressure from the process and enable the students to relax, access their creativity and maximise their ability to generate innovative project ideas

A conscious decision was made to avoid both external and commercial briefs throughout the workshop. The entrepreneurial mindset we were seeking to propagate is very different from a client-oriented relationship and focuses instead on self-generated projects. Maximising student buy-in and motivation is clearly essential to the entire workshop and is (in my experience) often diminished by imposing an external client brief. Instead the students were allowed to discover the projects they truly wanted to develop for themselves, albeit in partnership with their fellow participants. Our process facilitated generating these project ideas in groups and this experience of co-creation seemed new to all our participants.

Similarly, the workshop's strong theme of social enterprise encouraged an attitude of generosity essential for true collaboration. When working on a commercial brief, at some point the issue of monetisation will emerge and students can then become selfish and defensive, imagining future scenarios where they have either been ripped off or have become billionaires. Making the world a better place is an agenda that young people particularly resonate with and which brings out the best in them.

Once each group had generated a wide range of potential project ideas relevant to their area of interest, they chose their favourite three through a simple voting mechanism: they then worked up these three project ideas further by creating moodboards and informal presentation materials for each one of them. Finally, they presented these ideas to their wider pod group, after which the client groups were dissolved and the students were told to consider themselves as individuals once more.

Next, the students were told to consider each of the nine ideas (three from each of the three groups in their pod) as briefs and to pick which one they would most like to work on for the rest of the workshop. At this point the atmosphere became much more serious: this was clearly a big decision for all participants. The students were given plenty of time to make these choices (again via a simple voting mechanism, with up to three votes permitted) and then the final results were revealed. Each idea was considered in turn: those that hadn't received enough votes to be achievable were abandoned while those that were successful had their team members established. Thus each project idea was required to achieve a minimum level of 'buy-in' from participants before it became viable, allowing the students to give these ideas feedback and function as their own focus group.

This was probably the most crucial process of the entire workshop and its ramifications echoed throughout the second week. Judging which projects were or weren't feasible given the number of students committed to producing them and the respective skillsets within each of these potential project teams was a delicate and emotive task which required great finesse on the part of the workshop staff.

The end result was a series of project teams of varying sizes, from two to seven people. Our sixty individuals had now been transformed into (for this workshop) thirteen project teams and, crucially, these teams and projects had been completely self-determined and not imposed from above. Again, this sense of ownership was a vital ingredient to fuel the motivation necessary for the coming days.

Project Deliverables

Once the project teams and their co-created briefs had been established, the workshop shifted into production phase. The daily lectures from industry experts were replaced by a daily crit when the teams would pitch their projects to the same experts they had seen presenting to them the week before. The workshop staff moved into support mode and concentrated on helping each team develop their projects.

At this stage the students were reminded that they were presenting to an invited audience of industry, staff and students at an evening event on the workshop's penultimate night which would be the workshop's climax. The deliverables they would need to produce for this event included a short pitch video approximately three minutes in length, an A1 poster communicating their project idea, some kind of digital presence (e.g. a website or social media account) to represent their project online and any other artefacts they felt would best convey their idea. Many of the projects had a specific real-world product at their heart and students were encouraged to use the digital manufacturing facilities available at Makerversity and in their colleges to develop prototypes that would illustrate the potential of their ideas. Others focussed more on digital products or campaigns and the possibility of communicating these ideas by creating various promotional artefacts was also suggested.

The transition from supported participant to independent practitioner was bumpy for a few of the students while others were already eager to get started. In either case the workshop staff were constantly available to provide support, advice and guidance.



Collaboration & Cross-disciplinarity Practice

Although the ability to work collaboratively is essential for succeeding in the creative industries, the workshop emphasised its importance not just as a skill, but as a human quality essential for innovation and positive social change. The workshop fostered an atmosphere of collaboration, listening, mutual support and trust, which was reflected back by the students. Asked how the workshop had been beneficial, many of them commented on this aspect:

It taught me to relax and trust in people's abilities – we all have amazing skills and they are made even greater when people have the opportunity to meet and collaborate.

I've realised I love collaborating so much: it made me think that anything is possible!

I learnt I could depend on my team members: it felt like a family as we developed trust.

Some of the smaller teams struggled with production as they brought a narrower range of skills to their projects, although their ability to reach consensus quickly was a compensation. Where there was an even distribution of skills and disciplinary backgrounds, the projects were easier to implement. For example, one of the teams that had three filmmakers but no graphic designer talked about this being one of their biggest challenges, and another team of two who were both from fine art talked about their overlapping skills making the project difficult. However, many smaller teams did overcome this problem, pushing themselves far beyond their existing skillsets and rapidly developing the skills necessary to create their projects - in some cases overnight!



Final Projects

The climax of all of this hard work was the Thursday evening presentation event when each student group presented their final projects to an audience of over eighty guests comprising of industry professionals (some of whom were the experts who had critiqued their work during the workshop), media, staff, students and friends. Each team had made a short video to pitch their project (modelled on the 'Kickstarter' format) which was shown to the seated audience, after which they made a short speech. Delivering the video as opposed to a live pitch ensured that the teams would have the best possible chance to sell their project without being entirely dependent on a one-off pitch performance, as well as creating legacy material for their use after the workshop.

In addition each team had produced a large format poster to advertise their project, and were allocated a 'stall' similar to a degree show stand to display the other artefacts they had produced to prototype and communicate their projects. Guests circulated around these stalls and the students gave a series of more informal one-to-one pitches to them as the evening progressed. This is where several connections were made that led to future opportunities. The most prominent example of this is the Hook Up UAL project team from the most recent workshop (January 2016) who were approached by Marcus Saunders, UAL's learning technology expert, at this event. As a result of this interest and subsequent meetings this project is currently in development, with the team working in partnership with UAL to deliver it as a fully fledged element of the university's online offering.

There was also a celebratory element to the event: for the students this was the moment of release after all their hard work and spirits were high. Afterwards Fred reflected on the 'edutainment' aspect of the evening.

I was standing at the door as people left, thanking both the guests for attending and the students for all their hard work, and it suddenly hit me where I'd experienced this before - it was just like the end of one of my club nights! The expectation, the climax, the release, it had exactly the same dynamic. The students had created a performance out of their creativity almost as a by-product and they were loving the effect that it was having on their audience.

Fred

Descriptions of all of the 28 projects generated by the three iterations of the workshop to date are collated in Appendix Two.



Reflection and Feedback

Although not strictly a ‘taught’ element, reflection and feedback was a vital component of the workshop, and thus the whole of the last day was dedicated to this. Each project group was asked to talk about their experiences, and everybody was invited to offer ‘one word feedback’ on each project to bring all workshop participants back together as a ‘group mind’. Fred also offered feedback and insights that would help the students learn from and develop their projects further:

Good enough is sometimes better than perfect, because your project gets out there.

You pivoted a lot – it was only by doing the things that didn’t work that you got to what did.

Sucking at stuff is a prerequisite for learning to not suck at stuff.

Fred

It was also made explicit that the projects, great though they were, weren’t the ‘point’ of the workshop. Students were invited to remember how they had felt at the beginning and compare it to where they had arrived at the end. They revisited footage of their initial pitches from the beginning of each project alongside the final pitch videos, allowing them to see by direct comparison how much they had developed within the two weeks. The transformations were striking and the realisations impactful:

It totally changed me. It helped me feel more confident as a designer, to trust my creative skills, to have a method and see the creative industry from a more realistic point of view.

I learned how to listen before thinking and talking – it’s all about problem solving, and that helped me a lot because I hadn’t realised that before.

I’ve learned not to be so envious of other people and take pride in what I’ve got.

The feedback day made me realise how far I’ve come and that I will use this experience to better myself for the rest of my life.

At the end of the workshop, Fred talked about what could be next for the students’ projects: they had all developed a set of highly polished assets and, moving forward, had several options to capitalise on this hard work. They could pitch them to appropriate industry organisations looking for partnership, or they could use their videos and other assets as part of a Kickstarter campaign and get funding directly from their potential audience. Another other option was to submit them as part of their university degree work: alternatively they could simply use them as work for their portfolios when applying for jobs in the future.

There is clearly a future opportunity to develop the potential of these projects and provide further partnership to take them forward to launch stage which has so far been beyond our scope, despite the various spontaneous successes that we have already seen. However there are currently internal conversations within UAL about the possibility of these workshops becoming regular events in the university calendar, and the necessary partnership and resources may emerge to enable an additional developmental stage to be added.



Great projects - but the
point was the journey

Fred, Workshop Leader

#2 Behind The Curtain

Workshop Design and Delivery

Fred's initial workshop model was developed for subsequent iterations in collaboration with a wider team of industry experts from various disciplines, including Nat Hunter, Rafael Filomeno, Gemma Mitchell, Lottie Burnley and Sam Dunne. In this next section Sam, founder of design strategy studio cohere.is, describes this design process.





The User Experience

Our team's challenge was to create a complex and seamless learning experience across both online and face to face interactions. Our first step was to clearly define this as a UX (user experience) design brief, focusing on the experience we were creating for the student participants and adapting it as we progressed in an 'agile' manner. We began by mapping out the workshop structure and individual activities, then selected appropriate technologies for each of them, depending on their requirements.

After valuable consultation with UAL's Marcus Saunders we identified video conferencing software Fuze as a cornerstone for the workshop. Fuze allows for large group conversations moderated by the call leader, who can control a maximum of 12 simultaneous video feeds as well as audio output. Fuze also allows for simultaneous calls to take place under one account: each 'room' is given a number which can be submitted to move quickly between conversations. This agile functionality was perfectly suited to the complex workshop structure we needed to deliver.

We also used the messaging application Slack as a real-time, remote communications 'hub' to facilitate the orchestration of students moving in and out of the Fuze rooms. To familiarise the core team with Slack and to test our thinking, we began using it ourselves to communicate in place of email. Its dynamic functionality greatly improved our ability to collaborate as a team, which confirmed our belief that it was ideal for the workshop.

Identifying our ‘modes’

A crucial step in designing the workshop was to identify each of the real world interactions we wanted to ‘digitise’. As the workshop structure and content had already been developed for a face to face audience, we began by imagining how these exercises and processes could translate into digital interactions with remote participation, and thus how the original workshop design would have to adapt for this new context.

We noticed a range of recurring interactions for listening, presenting or working in teams and labelled the digital incarnations of these interactions ‘modes’. We identified a total of six distinct modes that our new structure would have to facilitate:

Mode 1: Listening

Use Case

Content or instructions is given to students. This mode is used by Fred delivering course material to students and by visiting experts giving presentations.

Technology and facilitation

Lecture broadcast to all four pods over Fuze via webcam and microphone. Questions taken from remote participants via Slack on a dedicated ‘Talk to Fred’ channel.

Mode 2: Participating

Use Case

Pod leader talks to their individual pod over Fuze: Students can participate in a wider discussion with their pod leader and ask questions.

Technology and facilitation

Pod leader initiates Fuze session with all pod members in pod room - they return to this virtual ‘room’ regularly.

Mode 3: Sharing

Use Case

Students share back to their pod group, sometimes including slides or images. This typically takes place following one-to-one or group exercise.

Technology and facilitation

Students present over Fuze, using ‘share’ functions to display images, slides or their laptop screens if necessary. Facilitated by pod leader.

Mode 4: One-to-one

Use Case

One student working with another student, unfacilitated by pod leader. This is used for workshop exercises in the early stages of the workshop.

Technology and facilitation

Students leave their pod room on Fuze and dial into separate room with a partner (partners determined by pod leader before hand). Students are called back to the pod room when task time is over via Slack.

Mode 5: Group working

Use Case

Students working together in a smaller group, unfacilitated by pod leader. This is used for later exercises and for project work.

Technology and facilitation

Student teams leave their pod room on Fuze and dial into separate room to collaborate. Screenshare is often used to work collaboratively on one task. Student teams typically return to same room number (their ‘studio’) again and again as group work progresses.

Mode 6: Crit

Use Case

Similar to ‘Presenting’ mode, students share their group’s work with visiting experts and Fred for feedback: their fellow pod members also observe. Discussion usually follows.

Technology and facilitation

Fred and visiting expert physically position themselves at each pod broadcast station at venue in turn, with pod leader facilitating transition between group presentations.

With our modes identified, our next task was to develop software, hardware and facilitation solutions that would support these interactions. Over time we’ve been able to iterate on both the technological set-up and delivery process, resulting in a steady improvement of the overall user experience.

Staff Team

Over the three versions of the workshop the staff team has steadily evolved to enable larger numbers of participants and advanced functionality. This team covers two main roles; firstly a core production team producing the workshop from start to finish and secondly a facilitation team that deals with the students throughout the workshop itself. During the workshop the roles tend to blur a little: the production team become part of facilitating the workshop at various times, and the facilitation team play an important role in contributing to production decisions on a daily basis.

An important part of the workshop philosophy is to recruit outstanding graduates of previous workshops as new staff members. These graduates give powerful support to student participants; nobody can mentor a team through the intensive rollercoaster experience of the workshop as well as someone who has recently been through it themselves. This setup allows for a very positive dynamic to emerge, as students feel led by someone closer to a peer than a tutor and see a potential career path for themselves as a result. The most recent team consisted of thirteen members in seven different roles: the experimental ‘prototype’ nature of these workshops meant that contingency was vital and it is possible that a smaller team would be sufficient for delivery in the future.

Role	Amount	Involvement	Responsibilities
Workshop Leader/ Exec. Producer	1	Design and workshop delivery	Designing workshop, overseeing production and leading workshop from start to finish. Working with pod leaders and managers to coach students through project work.
Producer	2	Design and workshop delivery	Producing workshop in its entirety: recruiting participants, venue operations and technology inductions, website and PR management, day to day team management and workshop troubleshooting.
Technologist/ Videographer	1	Design and workshop delivery	Designing, rigging and managing hardware/AV setup of the workshop. Capturing video and photography during the workshop. Troubleshooting student technology difficulties.
Pod Manager	2	Workshop only	Coaching pod leaders with technology and facilitation, coaching students through project work. Assisting and advising core team on production and troubleshooting.
Pod Leader		Workshop only	Supporting one ‘pod’ of 15 students through technology, workshop activities and project work.
Technology Assistant/ Runner	1	Workshop only	Supporting the technologist in rigging and technology management as well as documentation.
Content Assistant/ Runner	2	Workshop only	Assisting team to document the process and produce content to promote the workshop outside of UAL.



Workshop Preparation

Due to academic schedules and funding timelines we had just six weeks to prepare for the workshop which broke down roughly as follows:

Student Recruitment and Participation Grounding

As an extracurricular, cross-college and cross-course workshop, student participation was not mandatory. Promotion and recruitment was therefore an important first step. Fred asked course leaders to recommend participants from their courses, and we produced a PDF invitation and promotional website to give prospective participants an impression of what the workshop would involve.

Establishing student numbers was a key interdependency for other parts of production planning. To tackle this issue we imposed a strict application deadline and phoned each student individually beforehand to ground their attendance commitment.

Venue Design and Planning

Planning for the venue was complex and involved a regular liaison with Somerset House staff. As the venue was a blank canvas intended for events and exhibitions, we had to arrange all the workshop resources, including high-speed internet connection, lighting, furniture and all other equipment needed for a classroom, an operations room, a student workspace and the showcase event.

Team Recruitment and Induction

Whilst the core team was established early on, Fred had to invest time in recruiting previous participants to join the team as pod leaders and pod managers. These new team members then needed to be inducted and briefed on a number of occasions.

Expert Recruitment

The workshop calls for experts to give relevant presentations at the end of each day in the first week and to then return to provide daily critiques in the second week. Identifying and booking in these experts and scheduling these sessions took place over several weeks, with much back and forth due to their other commitments.

Workshop Briefing Event and Technology Induction

Participating students were invited to a mandatory briefing event at the Digital Catapult prior to the workshop, where they were given an overview of what they would be experiencing. This enabled us to physically help them sign up to and install Fuze and Slack. It also provided a chance for students to meet their peers and built commitment to their participation in the workshop.

Testing Technology

Students were asked to dial in to a scheduled testing session to give them an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the software they would be using. This was essential to minimise technical difficulties on the first day of the workshop.

Venue Set Up

We had access to the venue only shortly before the event and as a result had just one day to install all necessary equipment and furniture required for the next two weeks, which was not ideal.

The venue was divided into three main areas:

The Classroom

This main workshop space had a presentation area and seating arranged for up to 25 people. Most of the first week's activity took place in here. Workshop material and slides were projected behind the presentation area, while webcam feeds of remote students listening in were projected on the walls behind the seating to create a visual representation of the hybrid learning experience we were delivering. This gave students in the classroom a sense of their future involvement when they were participating remotely and made these online participants more explicit to visiting experts.

The Breakout Space

This was a multi-functional space filled with tables and chairs for student work and a refreshment station. Here was where the classroom collaborative work took place and the students were encouraged to populate it like a studio space. The room was converted into a large presentation space for the showcase event on the penultimate day and left in that configuration for the reflection day at the end of the workshop.

The Broadcasting Room

A 'broadcasting' or operations room contained pod stations where pod leaders would broadcast to their pods, as well as staff desks and all other necessary technology. This space was concealed from students behind curtains (in true 'Wizard of Oz' fashion).

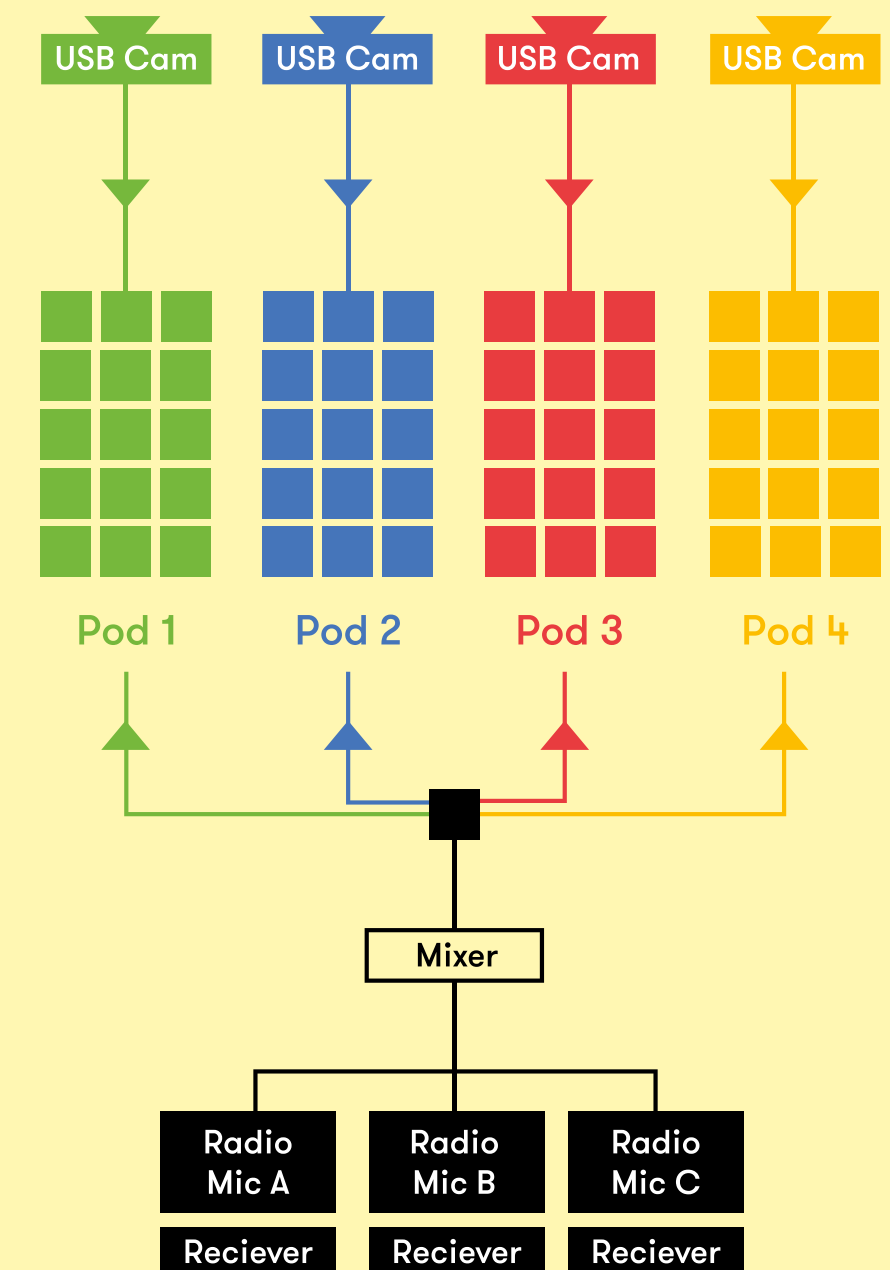
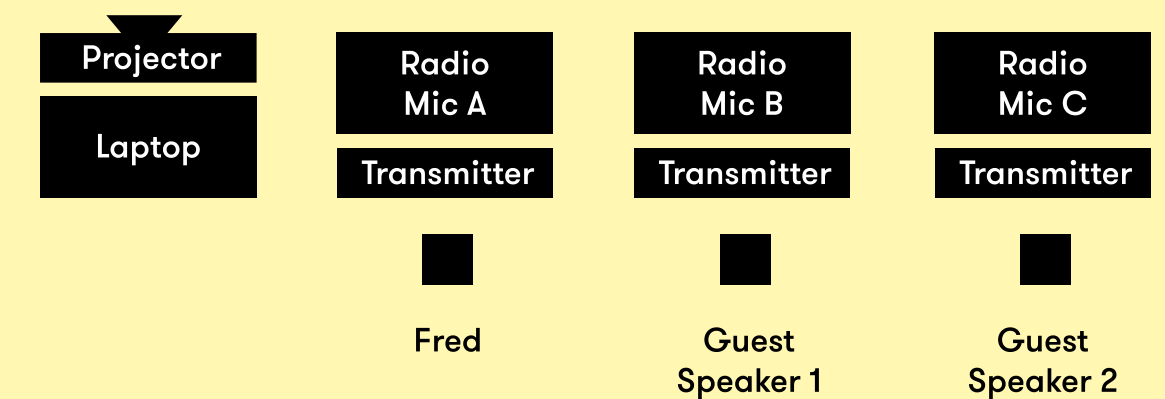


Hardware Set-up

Our technological set-up was based on the 'pod' structure used to deliver the workshop: participants were divided into four groups or pods of fifteen, each of which was facilitated by an individual Pod Leader. These pods all required their own dedicated workstation with space for a laptop, an extra monitor, a lamp (for optimum lighting on their personal webcam feed), a high-speed ethernet connection to the internet and a webcam connection streaming from the 'Classroom'.

From a technological perspective, each pod was its own distinct unit. All of them were allocated an individual Fuze 'room' that participants 'entered' every morning, to be greeted by their Pod Leader. In addition, each pod had its own dedicated Slack channel where participants could discuss any pod-specific topics with their pod leader and the wider staff team. When it was time to join Fred in the classroom space, the pod leader simply changed the video source (digitally via the setting options in Fuze) and audio source (manually unplugging their microphone and inserting a lead connected to Fred's radio mic) for their pod. The pod leader's camera would be turned off at this point but they were still able to monitor the call and importantly control the specific slides that were shared with their pod. Slides used by Fred or guest presenters were displayed in Fuze using 'share' functions to mitigate any risk that students wouldn't be able to read slides over the webcam feed. When a presentation-type 'Listening' session (mode 1) was complete, pod leaders would switch their camera and audio source again to return to leading the call (mode 2), directing students by either clarifying instructions, taking specific questions or facilitating the next session.

Over the course of several iterations, each improving on the last, this set-up successfully delivered the user experience that we had initially designed. No doubt further improvements are possible and more functionality will be added in future versions of the workshop.



#3 What Just Happened?

Workshop Analysis



				
AG ★ Aaron Grey		 ★ Aitor Fernandez	 ★ Annabel Chua	CL ★ Calvin Lok
 ★ Guillaume	HH ★ Hatabura	KL ★ Kajsa Lilja	LM ★ Lucio Martus	LC ★ Luisa Charles
		PW ★ Peggy Wang	PS ★ Priscilla	RF ★ Purvi Rathod
				★ Raf Filomeno

Modual workshop day eight: 13/01/2016

Technology

The workshop was a blended experience, with 75% of students engaging online and 25% attending the Somerset House classroom each day. Instant messaging app Slack and web conferencing platform Fuze were the core technologies of the workshop, enabling collaboration, communication and all kinds of digital camaraderie. With 26,000 Slack messages, 16GB of files uploaded over the two weeks, and 70,000 minutes of Fuze meeting time, it was an intense, digitally mediated experience. The combination of Slack and Fuze was chosen because these platforms compliment each other well, and together could create an efficient and enjoyable experience for the students. As an instant messaging environment, Slack's immediacy and informal communality created an ever-present platform for the web conferencing interactions enabled by Fuze.

The students' feedback about their technological experience was extremely positive overall, with several participants saying that the workshop changed their views about using these technologies:

I didn't know anything about digital, but here I finally understood what is it, how it works, and how to make it work for me in the future.

Don't know how my life will go on without Fuze and Slack.

I hated Twitter, Facebook, all the social media. Now I feel like I want to use them. Slack and Fuze were great. Thank you so much.

I was surprised to find myself enjoying working through Fuze and Slack. I'd been an analogue person and had believed they were not for me, but they're such powerful tools!

Although these comments focus on tools, it was the peer environment and the digital mindset that was transformative for students. As tools, the technologies themselves are replaceable - alternatives to Slack or Fuze would

work just as well. What remains constant is the need to cultivate attitudes and traits that can be powerfully expressed through such technologies - such as willingness to collaborate, innovation, resilience, community, social conscience and self-motivation.

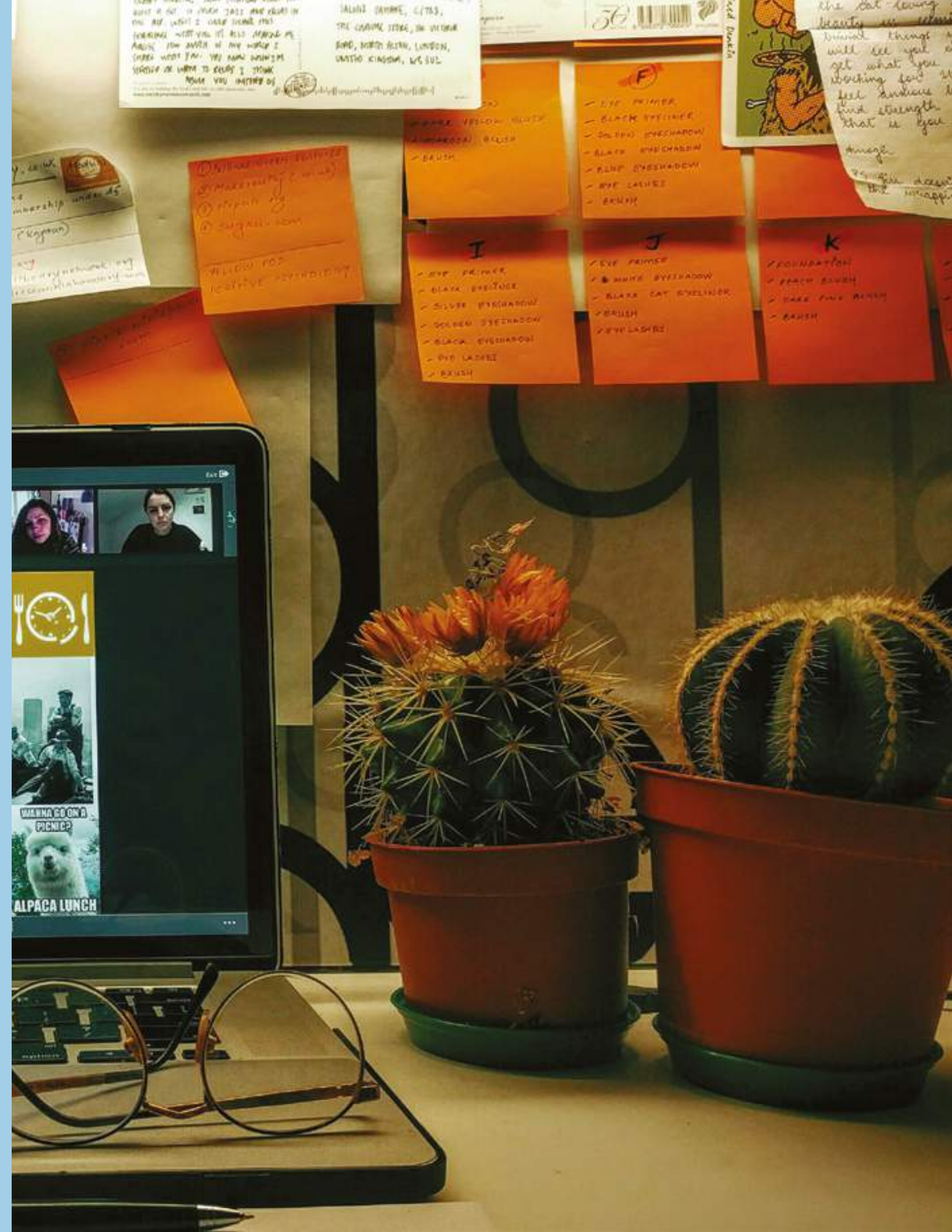
Many students often assumed that developing a project idea in the digital space simply meant developing an app, and the facilitators had to work hard to demonstrate that a strong concept and purpose was far more important than designing with an app in mind as a fixed outcome. Perhaps the students' technocentric approach is a symptom of the 'appification' of the web and their daily use of mobile apps to engage with products and services. However, it is important for students to understand that apps are not an end in themselves. Our strategy to address this issue was to lead students beyond the role of 'digital consumers', helping them explore higher levels of digital creativity, and to experience the complex and varied tasks required to deliver a digital product. Embedding pitching skills was another: the hands-on experience of delivering a professional pitch to industry experts and receiving their immediate feedback makes very apparent the need for a fully rounded set of assets that goes beyond simple mock-ups and prototypes to include strategy and vision.

Students demonstrated high levels of self-motivation around exploring new software; one student produced an extremely professional pitch video by learning Adobe After Effects from YouTube in a night. She had never made a video before, but was extremely eager to get the job done, and so taught herself what she needed to know. When she revealed this on the last day she received a spontaneous round of applause from her fellow students. This behaviour captured the entrepreneurial spirit of the workshop, where the energy levels and fast pace brought about a 'do or die' atmosphere, one which equips students for working in today's creative industries. The fact that one of the steepest learning curves for students was around how to make a video showed that non-networked digital capabilities are still fundamental for creative practitioners.

Positive Digital Addiction

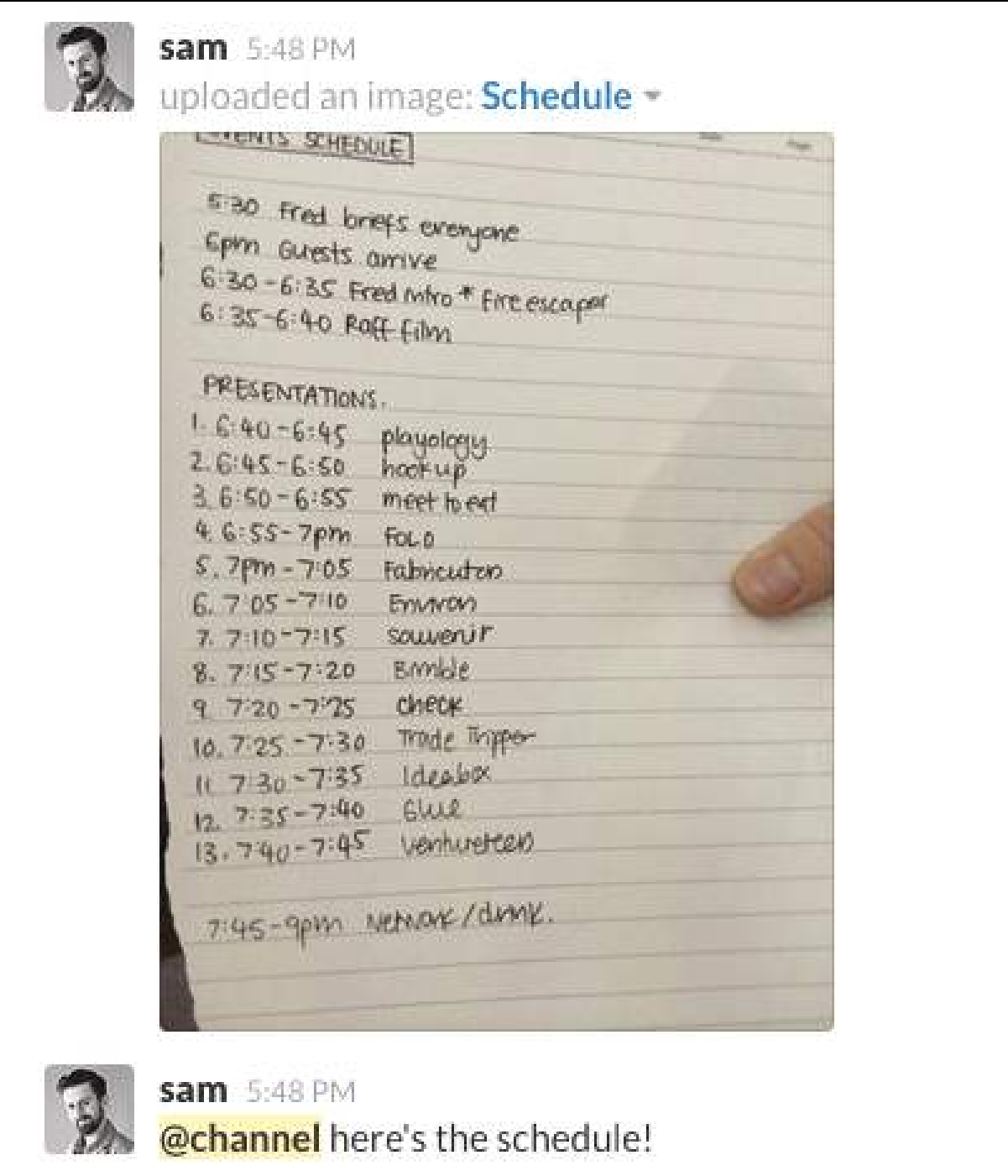
We observed a kind of 'positive digital addiction', with students particularly immersed in communicating with each other on Slack to develop their projects and exhibiting 'productively addicted' behaviour over the course of the workshop. The hyped trance that is the norm of digital life can be an anxious one - constantly checking Twitter, Instagram, Facebook or other platforms is a familiar compulsion for many people. Tapping into this compulsion is part of Slack's business model, but given that passive digital addiction has become the norm, we aimed to equip students to make conscious choices about social technologies, and turn a familiar kind of behaviour into an engine for good. Participants were also encouraged to use social media to increase the scope and reach of their projects. This invested social technologies with a sense of purpose, showing students that platforms like Instagram and Twitter can be used in powerful and meaningful ways, rather than just for passive, mindless consumption. The students used the existing platforms they knew well as digital consumers to distribute the powerful content that they had generated, transforming their relationship with these platforms from consumer to creator in the process.

All participants and facilitators experienced a degree of uncertainty and glitchiness at the beginning, but as the technology (and each other) became familiar, the technology receded into the background, and the creative process took over. A technological baptism of fire is an inevitable part of a workshop like this and makes a face to face session with all participants at the beginning highly desirable, to ensure that basic installation of the required software has been accomplished. Most of the technical glitches happened early on in the workshop and were ironed out quickly, though Internet connectivity was sometimes an issue for students working remotely.



Slack's Role

Slack acted like a command centre for the staff, who used it to share logistical information such as timetables and Fuze room numbers, and to receive files. It also acted as a troubleshooting tool when things went wrong: If a Fuze channel went down, staff could drop a message into Slack telling students what was happening and what to do.

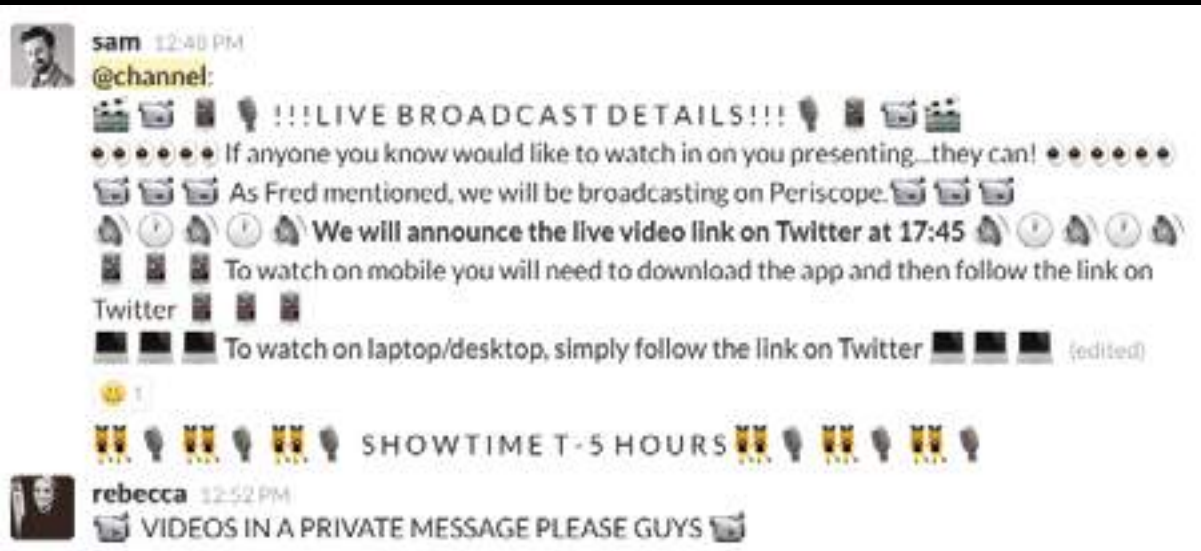


Launch night schedule uploaded to Slack

Communications were made in a real-time stream of emojis, memes and digital chatter - a far cry from clunky institutional email systems or virtual learning environments. For educators, the digital familiarity of tools like Slack offers a way to make what we are doing more attractive to students, and to orient them to a techno-social environment that they are very likely to encounter and enjoy using in their professional lives. Our intention was to co-opt the vernacular of social media and employ it instead for teaching purposes.

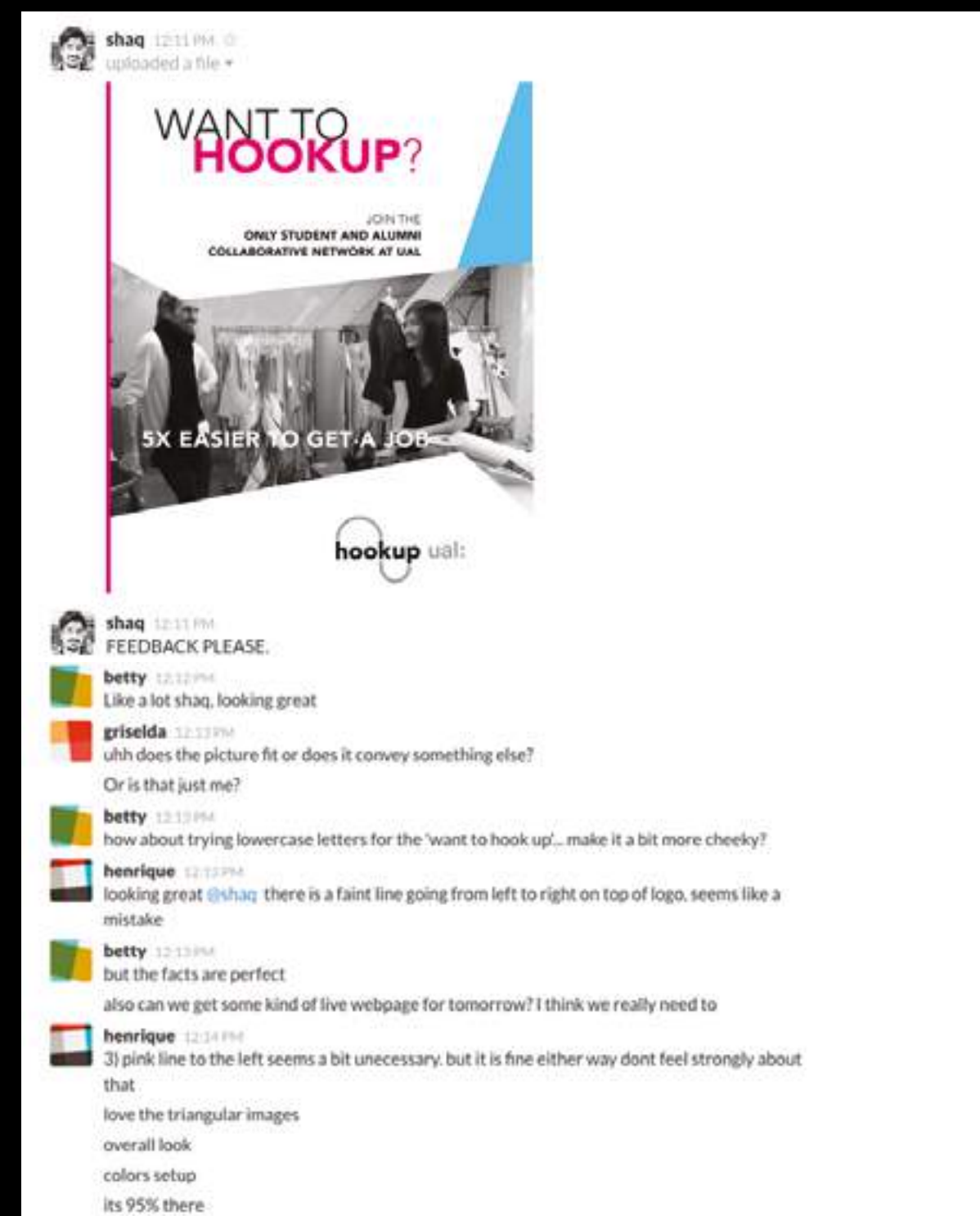
Emojis were used both by the staff and students:

The emojis are a dream, because people respond to them. It really helps having a little icon of a telephone meaning 'dial-in at this time'. The visual language stops it becoming dull.
Rebecca, Pod Manager



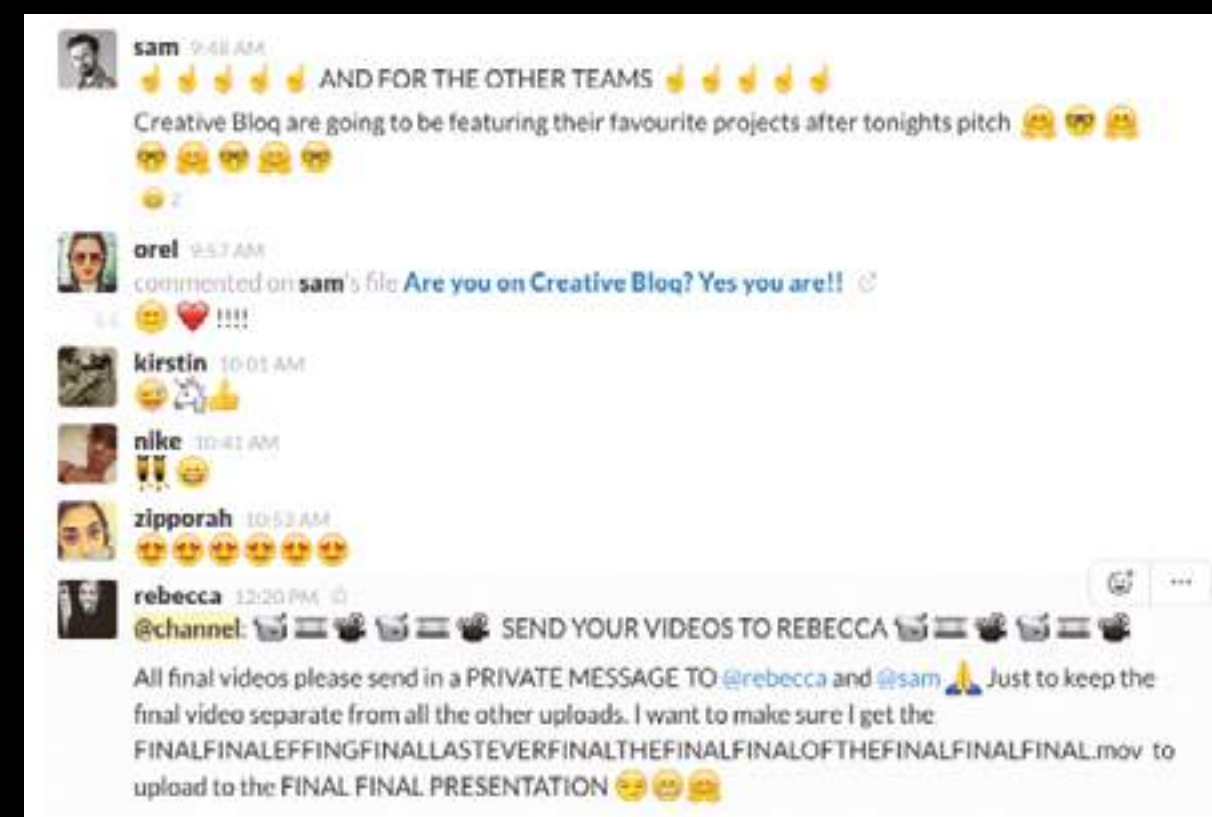
Producer Sam and Pod Manager Rebecca share instructions about the launch night

The teams used Slack to develop their ideas, share files, feedback and build their projects, as in this example:



In this example the students were sharing screenshots of their work with each other on Slack and the workflow went like this

1. Make work in Photoshop
2. Take a screenshot of Photoshop mock-up
3. Share on Slack to get feedback
4. Make amends in Photoshop

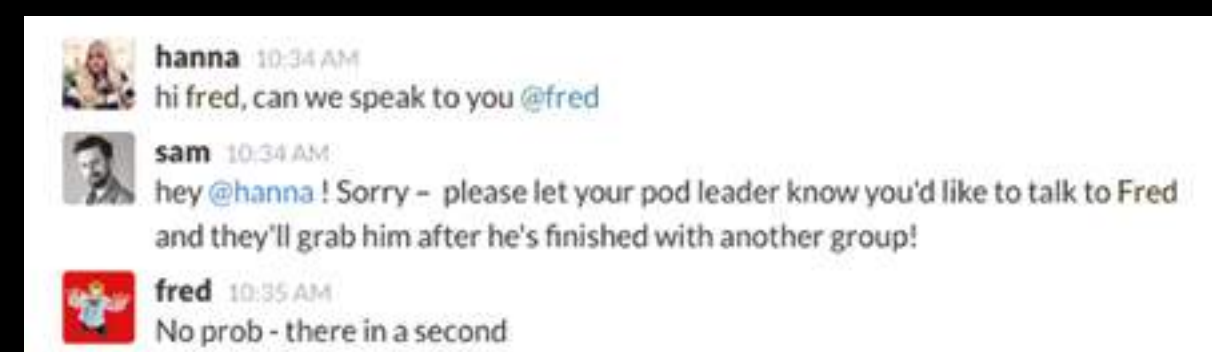


Sam shares information about a blog post, and Rebecca instructs students about uploading videos

Giving staff the ability to respond immediately to student queries is another powerful feature of Slack:

Students are a bit shocked when they ask you a question and you're there immediately. You can have a bit of fun with that as well. Sometimes they'll be talking when they're in a group and they're like "maybe we should ask Sam" and I'll say "oh, there you go!" They don't really know I'm watching them.

Sam, Production Manager



Obviously the above response time is possible because of the overall workshop setup as well as Slack, but it is a real luxury for students to get a tutor response in one minute!

This is a simple example of how Slack can compliment existing creative software and help students share their 'offline' digital work in a collaborative, communal mode. Of course, it shares this functionality with many other platforms but compared with similar interactions via, say, email, it is far more elegant.

Slack also offers the ability to return to earlier conversations, examining how ideas evolved and reviewing the moment when inspiration struck. This is perhaps more useful for academics than practitioners but offers those who are interested in the creative process many exciting opportunities to analyse it more closely. Several examples are included on these pages, as well as instances of more playful conversations.

kirstin 12:07 PM
can you do it as pdf as i haven't got indesign
orel 12:07 PM
oh we will soon
i just sent it to zippy so it can be edited with today's info
@kirstin how is the video going?
kirstin 12:09 PM
oh right cool
or about 3/4 way with drawings
going to finish them, have some lunch and then go scan them in
although should watch presentation at 2
orel 12:09 PM
@kirstin how is the shirt printing going? any progress?
kirstin 12:09 PM
awwww
@kirstin you go girl
adrian 12:09 PM
it is gonna be screenprinting finally
the technicians are gonna help me
orel 12:09 PM
told
zipporah 12:09 PM
@adrian can you send me a picture to add to the presentation?
orel 12:09 PM
uploaded an image: storyboard.jpg



shannen-bn_jal 12:09 PM
sounds good!
ok guys lets summarize on here before we go out into the big wide Puzer world alone
rebecca-l_jal 12:09 PM
Good idea! Groovy. So first topic?
The main points I have jotted down
- Gives a safe, friendly environment that encourages positivity and conversation between two people
- Either through physical sketches or through digital screens on each table (with an animated image moving)
- Breaking the norms - often people will sit with who they're with, encourage interaction
Our next?
tumult-jal 12:09 PM
Our Out Our - although the digital screens aren't mentioned on the slide - so perhaps leave them as a point to expand to in the future? A bit of a Green Hat vibe
rebecca-l_jal 12:09 PM
Ah yes, good plan w/ lady
OO GREEN HAT
Anything else. Or themes and our tamagotchi/baymax idea (we should make map names for that)



fred, stuff 12:09 PM
That's what I do - break meetings. Get me some newspapers and drag this
bit out to the dumpster
But no - they're back - how did they survive my last tag?
feedback 12:09 PM
al 12:09 PM
Thanks to the Social Change team and to @amy and @fred for working things out! EXCITEMENT & FEAR
abdullah 12:09 PM
Had an intensive but amazing day, thank you @fred & @amy
naina 12:09 PM
a hectic start in the morning, but excited about the projects!
sam 12:09 PM
LETS SEE YOUR EMOJIS
mariana 12:09 PM
great day!
ximena 12:09 PM
ila 12:09 PM
annabel 12:09 PM
Awesome day! Very productive, fun and exciting
purvi 12:09 PM
Excitement and fear are riding on the shoulder! What a great day! A big thanks to the social change team, and our
pod leader @amy! Looking forward to the day 5!
priscilla 12:09 PM
Every day it gets better!



Fuze's Role

As a web conferencing platform, Fuze brings a host of specific social dynamics to the table. This is an inevitability, since webcams involve seeing ourselves, and seeing how others see us, which can have a profound effect on our sense of self and identity. It is worth noting, if only as a brief digression, that webcams are potentially anxiety-inducing technologies (Daniel Miller and Jolynna Sinanan's book *Webcam* offers an in-depth discussion of this). Some students may feel self-conscious about their appearance or the environment they are working in; others may enjoy being able to see themselves in the webcam 'mirror' as they work in their teams. Obviously both staff and students were at liberty to turn their webcams and microphones off if they chose to. For students, turning the camera off enabled more privacy when needed. For staff it enabled 'lurking', the potentially controversial technique of staying in a Fuze room and observing what their teams were doing without being explicitly conspicuous:

Sometimes I keep track of the number of the rooms that they are in, then I can slyly check in on them with my mic off or my camera off and that means I can just keep an eye on what they are doing. It's great to see them talking without knowing that I'm listening: it sounds a bit creepy but it's really useful.

Amy H, Pod Leader

You can jump in and out with your camera off: after a while they stop noticing it, so then you can hear the students being truthful, which is really good. If you sit down with the group, in a room, they know you're sitting down with them - they can see you there. Sometimes that's fine and they say "can I ask you a question?" but a lot of the time it's not as natural.

Matthew, Pod Manager

Some staff felt that when they were in Fuze with their cameras on, the students were more self-conscious. Rosie felt that when she was visible on Fuze, initially the students expected her to provide practical or logistical information and lead their discussions.

I find when we're all in the Fuze room they think that they are just there to either hear Fred talk or for me to relate something to them. They are kind of sitting there, waiting for me to tell them the important stuff.

Rosie, Pod Leader

Similarly, Matthew noted:

If you're in one of the Fuze rooms with students, at the start the conversation is more stilted: people are waiting to be told what to do.

Matthew, Pod Manager

There is an interesting nuance here; students feeling that 'when the pod leader is here, we're getting information, so we'll wait until that's over to get on with the real work', implies they are seeing Fuze as a logistical tool and perceiving the pod leader to be there for a specific function. However, students feeling self-conscious because they feel 'watched' as they work is a different, more complex reason for them to hold off from being vocal. In both cases, there's a complex interaction between the technology, the context or purpose it is seen to be used for, and the ensuing social dynamics.

Fuze enables screen sharing during conference calls, allowing one participant to broadcast their screen to all the others. This means students can work together on files in real time, learning practical skills from each other along the way:

Being able to draw as we talked was good and something we could do spontaneously on Fuze in the moment.

Student

There were three girls, and they were all working from their own houses and I was watching them without them knowing; they were sharing screens and working in Photoshop and turning on and off their layers, it just looked amazing. They were like "oh no change that, take that bit off" and they were just giving feedback immediately.

Amy M, Pod Leader

This kind of work flow is now standard for the creative industries: our graduates will experience it when they enter the workplace and are here beginning to develop these skills as students.



Social dynamics online and offline

Participants experienced the social dynamics of the online and offline spaces in various ways. For many, the online space enabled them to be more confident and expressive, while for others face to face interactions were easier or more natural.

There was a lot of shyness when the students were in the room but the roles completely reversed online and some of them really came out of their shells. Obviously they spend a lot of time online and it's something they're more used to, whereas in the room they wouldn't even look at you.

Amy H, Pod Leader

It's interesting that the quiet people online are really loud in real life and vice versa. I don't know why; I guess people work better in different situations.

Matthew, Pod Manager

Pod leaders have said that actually people felt freer to share their ideas and be silly in the digital space, especially on Slack. In one brainstorming exercise the online teams produced ten times more ideas than those in the room.

Sam, Workshop Producer

Since 75% of workshop participation was online, each of the pod leaders met their groups for the first time on different days, depending on the schedule. So Amy H and her students met face to face on day one before interacting online, whereas the other groups had one, two, or three days participating entirely online before meeting face to face. Amy H said that meeting them on the first day helped her to interact with them better online (although of course she had no comparison).

One pod manager said they felt that students were 'a bit more themselves' online, and that it was easier to get to know them there because the student-teacher dynamic was less apparent:

The really good thing is that everybody is on the same level online. So, when you check in online it's not about where you've been to University, it's not about how old you are.

Rebecca, Pod Manager

It's not a teacher-student relationship, it's a lot more like an experienced facilitator who can help, and you're more on the same level as the students.

Matthew, Pod Manager

The first three days was just online, and it actually worked really well: I guess everyone was quite equal. Normally in a room you'll have someone who's standing up and being talkative all the time: online no-one was the quiet one, everyone seemed like an equal in that way.

Ellis, Pod Leader

Amy H also spoke about how the dynamic of the online space made her feel less exposed as a pod leader in terms of her age, which was very similar to that of the participants:

The fact that they are my age, or maybe just a year younger, was a bit strange for me. That comes across a lot more when meeting them in person: they can see that I am young too and that makes it harder for me. Being online helps me to put all that aside and help them without worrying about how I am coming across.

Amy H, Pod Leader

The flip side of this is that it can also be hard to gauge the students: it's harder to pick up on their levels of experience through their physical appearance, and through informal conversations in ways that might happen more naturally in a face-to-face setting:

In the physical space, I think there is that human quality when you just naturally get into a conversation about, "oh yes, there was that time when I did that." In the digital you don't have those kinds of conversations, which can be sad.

Rebecca, Pod Manager

The process of getting to know the students was affected in various ways by the online experience. Amy M said she felt more comfortable physically popping over to a group than logging into a Fuze room as it's less intrusive and conspicuous. Matthew had a different view:

One of the guys always sat with a lot of picture frames behind him and they were all empty. Every time I saw him I was like, "have you not put any pictures in?" and you wouldn't have that kind of personal interaction in a student-teacher environment in a classroom. You need to know people's personalities a lot more because there's that distance of the computer, you have to understand if they're struggling or if they're not happy, so you have to be a bit more open about it and just check that everyone is alright.

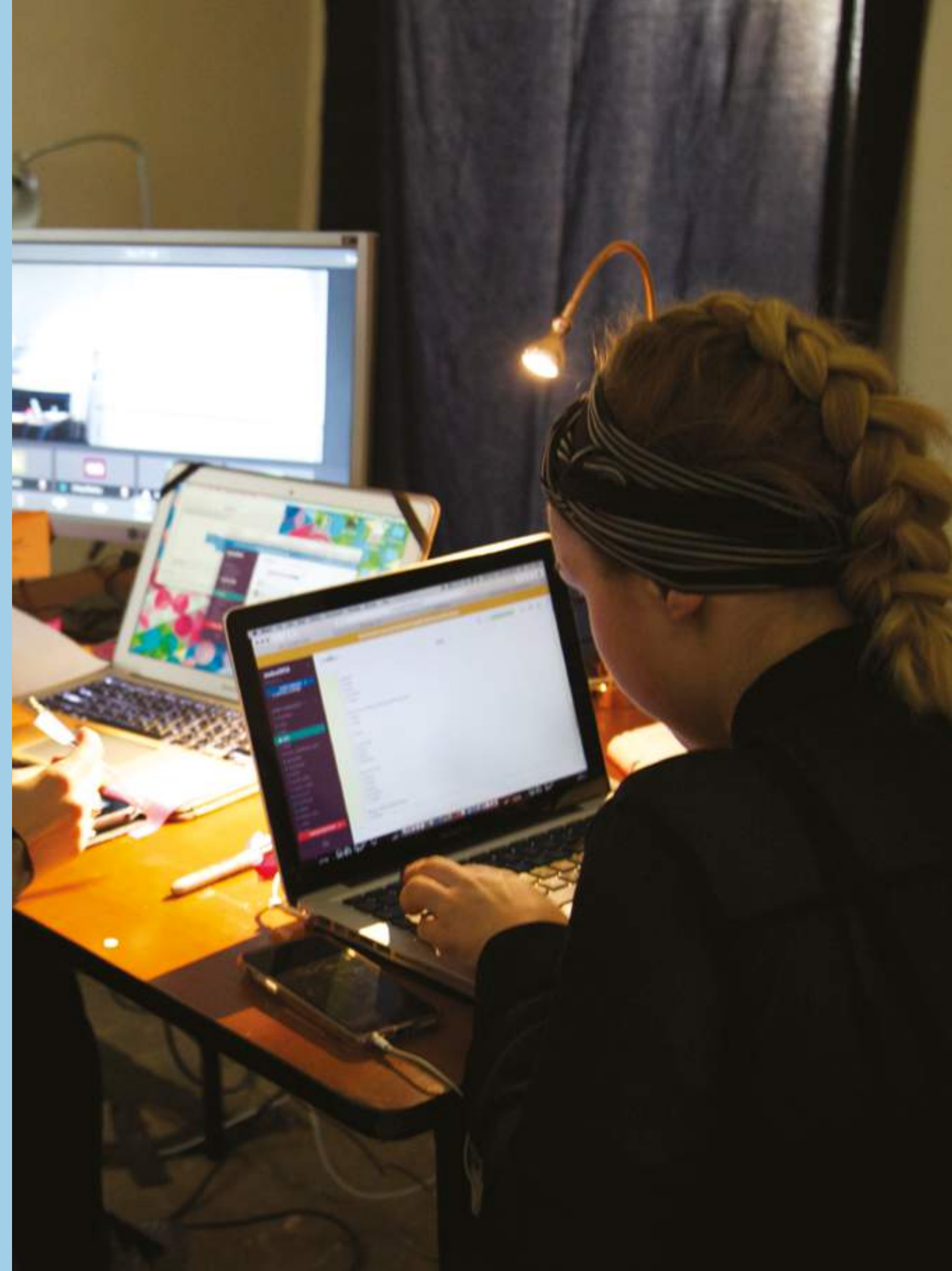
Matthew, Pod Manager

Amy M said that Slack was a space where she could get to know the students, especially in their individual groups. The 'banter' channel helped with this, as did the fact that students seemed to feel more free to express themselves in Slack than Fuze:

The first day it was difficult to get stuff out of them: obviously it's quite a daunting thing to suddenly be online with lots of new people and get to know them. But my group were in on the second day so I made sure I remembered all their names, and when they came in I shook all of their hands and said "Hi Nena, Hi Annabelle." I think some of them were surprised that I actually knew all their names. Getting to talk to them in real life was nice, so then when we went back online the next day, it was a lot easier than the first day, because I'd got to know them face to face.

But getting to know them on Slack was good: when they were within their own groups they would definitely be more vocal. When we were all in a real world room, I would ask "Does anyone have anything to say?" and no one there would pipe up. And then we'd go into their Slack room and they'd say "OK, I've got these questions" but they wouldn't say it in front of everyone. Also on Slack, because we have the banter channel, they have their own personal channel to chat, so sometimes they'd put random stuff in there and that was a personal thing away from work, where I'd get to know them more.

Amy M, Pod Leader



Working processes online and offline

Some aspects of the workshop worked better online and some face to face. Slack and Fuze were good for organization, planning, brainstorming and feedback:

When we were doing the brainstorming session I asked them: “how many ideas can you come up with?” The students in the room were getting a maximum of 25 and the students online would be getting 100 or 125. So it just shows how it’s a lot freer, not to lock their ideas in their heads but just to let them loose on something like Slack - it’s quite cool.

Matthew, Pod Manager

The physical space and face to face interaction were important for actual making, moodboards, prototyping, and some aspects of team building and communication. Student feedback also reflected the benefits of working in person:

Slack and Fuze were good for all feedback and planning, but bad for any physical making or moving forward with the real life aspects.

It was great to know Fuze, but I still think it’s better to work in person. On the other hand Fuze helped in the organisation, allowing us to meet every evening after a workday.

Loved being in person for this day: we were really able to physically visualise what we were thinking for our ideas and it was great to go through all of them and pick that way too.

Rosie also felt that the students benefitted from being physically together, and pointed out that they began to organise this for themselves as required:

They’ve all been physically together, meeting up in different locations. One team went to this girl’s apartment and they did a whole day of work there; other people have been meeting up in places like colleges and campuses and stuff. I think they benefit from that physical interaction with each other and being in the same room.

Rosie, Pod Leader

One student commented that the most important thing was that everyone in the group was in the same mode:

There were issues when most of us were in the classroom but one person was online. It was better when we were either all together physically or all offline.

For making and prototyping, it was good for students to get away from technology and screens. Rebecca and Sam both talked about the importance of the physical space for this stage of the process:

In the prototyping stage, when you are trying to get them to make something online, it’s next to impossible: they freak out, they think everything needs to be slick, because it’s on the computer. I really noticed on the day when we wanted people just to make stuff, that the people in the physical space came back with work and the people online just didn’t have what we needed. It’s not their fault: it’s that fear that they can’t get away from the computer.

Rebecca, Pod Manager

When people are online, they are in computer mode, rather than thinking mode. If everyone is basically sitting at their laptop rather than doing a pen and post-it note kind of thing, I think it really changes the way people approach things like mood boarding. I noticed people online were being much more precise about things and being more fussy when designing their moodboards: in the real world you're just slapping stuff on, you're thinking physically: that's harder to do online.

Sam, Workshop Producer

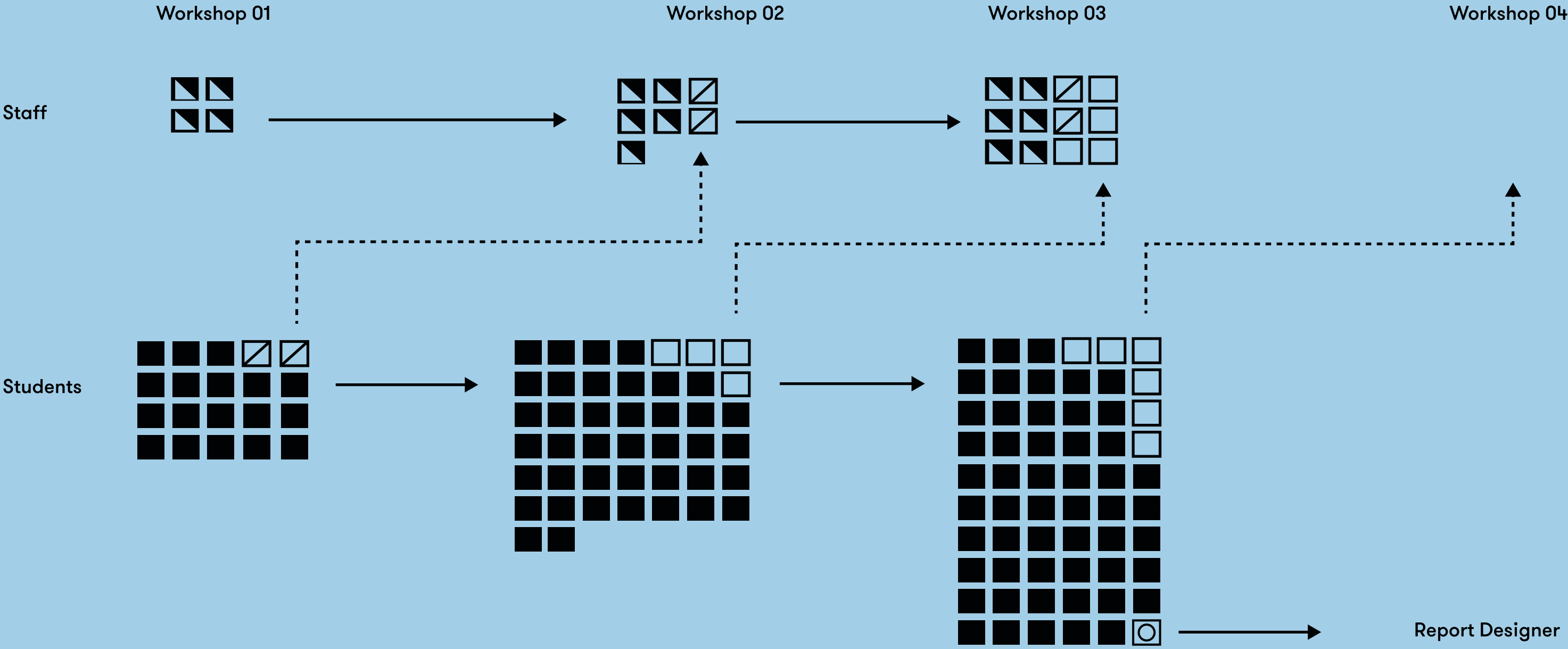
One student made a similar point about the moodboards:

For me I had a hard time doing moodboards digitally. We were able to get so much more work done because we met up each day, whereas on Fuze we went off on tangents. It's why we trusted each other - having physical contact made a happy working environment.


It has been great to reflect on where the online and offline can work well in this kind of workshop. We have seen that both modes have their advantages and limitations, but can compliment each other when used skillfully. Overall, this blended nature of the workshop reflects Fred's philosophy that the modern design studio can be powerfully enhanced by having the option to communicate online, but working entirely online is often not satisfactory and a hybrid format combining the best of both worlds is the most effective.



The Role of Pod Leaders and Managers: Co-creating The Workshop







The pod leaders are there to support the students and always be available, and the pod manager's job is to make sure that everything goes smoothly with the pods and to support the pod leaders.

Matthew, Pod Manager

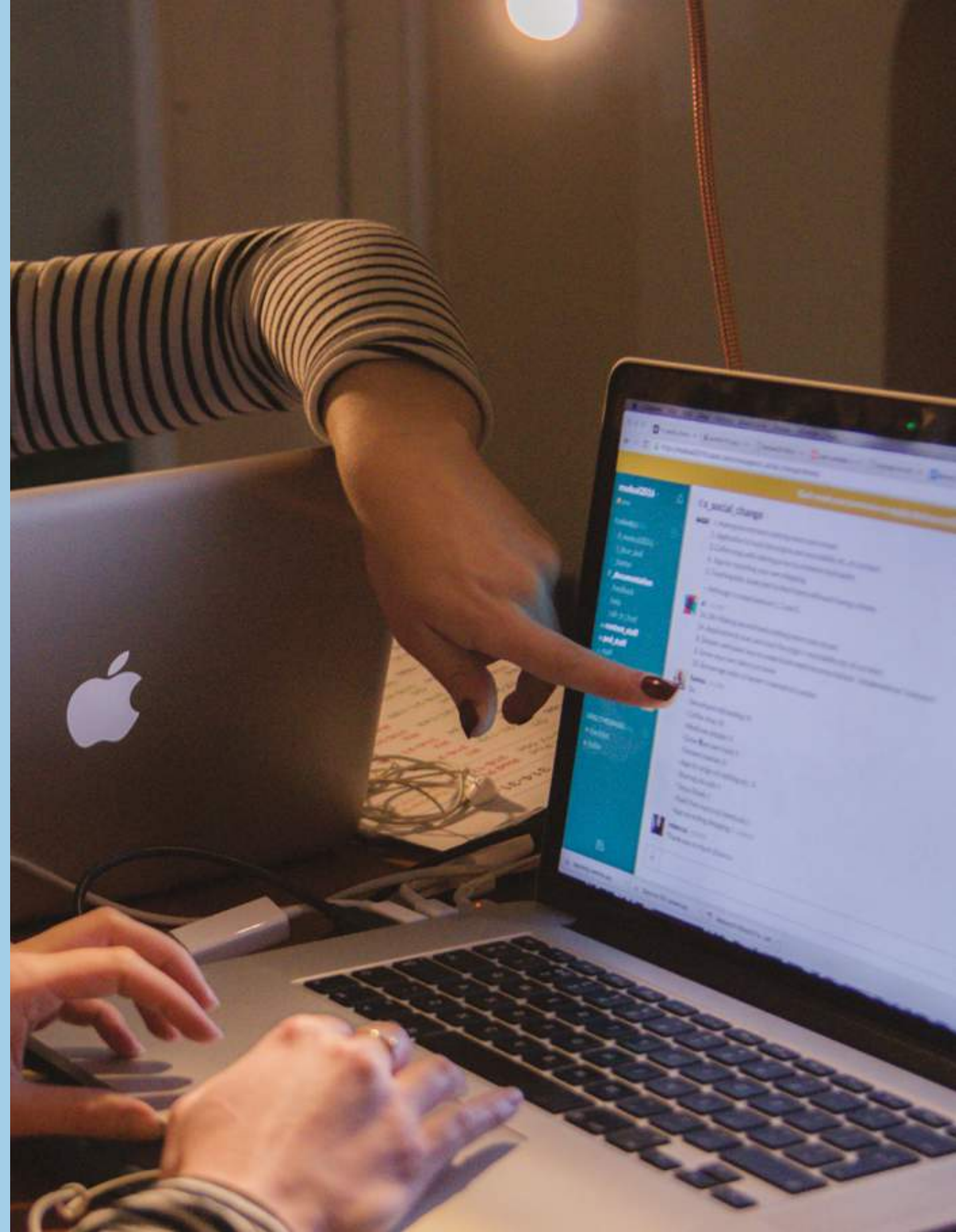
Pod leaders provided daily technical, practical and moral support for students in their group. All of them had taken the workshop previously. This circular employment structure added a layer of integrity: once students realised their pod leaders were recent graduates of the workshop, they felt increased trust in and ownership of the experience, as well as considering the pod leader role as a possible future opportunity for themselves. In fact, several participants explicitly requested to be considered as pod leaders at the end of the workshop:

*I'd love to be part of this in the future, on the other side of the team (*hint hint*). It's a passion I've always had and you guys inspire me so much.*

When giving feedback, the pod leaders drew on their experiences both from their creative practice and from their participation in earlier iterations of the workshop. It was an intense, challenging and transformative experience for the pod leaders, who spoke about the need for dedication, compassion and selflessness in carrying out their roles. It became an opportunity to discover something about themselves:

I was worried about the teaching role, but it was surprising how fast it actually made sense to me, what I was expected to do, and how I fell into the bossy person that I didn't think I was! If I was in their shoes I'd be the person in the back going "hmm, not so enthusiastic," but I had to change that and bring something out of me that I don't normally show. It surprised me how much I adapted to that role.

Amy H, Pod Leader



The blended delivery meant that the pod leaders needed to become comfortable with tutoring online very quickly, working across Slack and Fuze and multi-tasking in an intense environment. They spoke about the challenges of keeping on top of the multiple lines of communication:

On Slack you have to keep on track of all three groups, plus the Modual staff channel, so when you get new information in, it can be very intense.

Amy M, Pod Leader

Obviously you are looking at a lot of stuff from all the different groups and you have to have a good memory, remember what they are doing and focus. If you turn off for a minute, you are going to miss a lot, because it's such a condensed workshop.

Amy H, Pod Leader

The first day was pretty overwhelming because I realised I had to be doing about ten things at once; I knew it was going to be fast paced and the tech was new, but the team around me were absolutely amazing.

Rosie, Pod Leader

However, they were all able to deal with this flood of information once they had settled into the process. The ability to catch up on messages in Slack retrospectively was helpful for making sure the pod leaders knew what had been happening amongst their teams. Direct messaging and notifications also helped manage the potential information overload.

Although managing the Slack/Fuze set up was initially overwhelming for the pod leaders, they unanimously said it was easy to get to grips with after a few hours:

As soon as you understand what's going on and get to grips with it, it becomes like second nature. All the pod leaders picked it up pretty quickly, you just need a couple of hours to understand how it all works.

Rosie, Pod Leader

The first day of the tech was really a baptism of fire. But as soon as I understood that that lead was Fred's audio, that was my audio, and to just swap them around, it all made sense.

Amy H, Pod Leader

On day one everybody was a bit awkward: they were like "oh, it's a bit tricky." By day two and day three, it's just natural.

Matthew Lyall, Pod Manager

The pod leaders had to learn to step back and let their students get on with the projects, which was challenging for them, as they quickly became invested in their teams and were all committed to ensuring the students had a good experience:

It was trying to find the balance between assisting them or giving them ideas, and them doing it themselves. We didn't want to spoon feed them, like "this is what you have to do - do this." Because of doing the workshop myself I knew when the car crashes were going to come and I didn't want them to have them, but at the same time you have to have those failures to get the best project you can.

Amy M, Pod Leader

The students' feedback about their pod leaders was extremely positive:

I can't imagine our project being as it is without Rosie's suggestions, warm personality and help. Thank you!

Amy H. (blue pod leader) was A. M. A. Z. I. N. G!!! (Thank you so much xxx)

Thanks so much for your patience and advice along the way @ellis!! It was an absolute pleasure xx

@amy.mc thank you so much for your help, encouragement and guidance! We all really appreciate it!

We asked the pod leaders what they felt makes a good pod leader:

I think selflessness is really important. You need to put yourself aside and say "this is about them, it's not about what I'm getting out of it." You will get something out of it but it's not about that.



Also, being able to listen and really engage: the amount of work that they are doing and the evolution of their ideas is happening so fast, you have to make sure you don't miss anything. So, definitely the ability to focus and not lose attention.

And be kind, want to help them. Be passionate about helping them.

Amy H, Pod Leader

You have to be compassionate and understand that they are going to need your help at some point. In a way you feel responsible for them, so you end up connecting to them. You've got to be dedicated to it and willing to put in the extra time, because no creative project ever starts and finishes when it says it'll start and finish. I'd be on Slack in the evening if they had any problems. So definitely dedication.

Amy M, Pod Leader

Caring basically, caring about them. Also you have to be enthusiastic about the workshop and trust in the process and trust in Fred himself, because if you don't believe in the workshop then you're not going to be teaching anything beneficial. The pod leaders really benefitted from it as students last year, and it changed them: they felt much more productive afterwards, so they want to make sure that other students have that same experience.

Rosie, Pod Leader

The pod managers provided another valuable bridge between the workshop and industry, as first UAL and then workshop graduates who now work as professionals in the creative industry they were fantastic 'best case examples.' Matthew Lyall is a branding, conceptual and digital designer, and Rebecca Thomson is a freelance designer specialising in socially conscious projects: both were participants on the first workshop, then became Pod Leaders on the second and Pod Managers on the third. Their experience of industry life and their practical knowledge of project development, pitching and delivery were invaluable for students. They were relatable but inspiring figures, and had references to relevant projects and businesses at their fingertips.

The role of Pod Manager is another potential development layer for workshop participants to aim for: Matthew and Rebecca's experience as workshop participants themselves in the first iteration was referred to explicitly at various points and thus was another example of how this project is co-created with the student body. Recently Rebecca has worked as a producer on another workshop that Fred has initiated and so this evolutionary path extends still further.

The concept and practice of co-creation is native to the digital space: its emergence during the workshop's evolution was very natural and this strand of the workshop has been embraced enthusiastically by the students themselves.

On Slack you have to be to be on track of all three groups, plus the Modual staff channel, so when you get new information in, it can be very intense.

Amy M, Pod Leader



Crits and pitching to industry

The regular presence of industry experts created an inspiring atmosphere of professionalism and helped students get a flavour of the world of professional practice in a safe but challenging environment. Delivering daily pitches to industry professionals gave students a sense of the pace and pressure of working in a studio environment.

Experts from Bethnal Green Ventures, Makerversity, Fixperts, Biblio.life, Common Industry and It's Nice That came in every day from 5pm to hear and respond to the students' pitches. The fact that the students were aware of and aspired to emulate or even collaborate with these experts created excitement and nervousness.

Joel Gethin Lewis – Helicar and Lewis
Nat Hunter
Ursula Davies – Makerversity
Paul Wyatt
Liam Fay-Fright – Common Industry
Aaron Cole – Common Industry
Hem Patel – Signal / Noise

Christian Thumer – Signal / Noise
Glen Mehn – Bethnal Green Ventures
Paul Miller – Bethnal Green Ventures
Will Hudson – It's Nice That
Mehmood Khan – biblio.life

These experts gave feedback that was sometimes tough, but always honest and which helped students to refine their projects. The pitches were delivered both online and in person, and students reflected that it was a very valuable though nerve wracking aspect of the workshop:

This was our first presentation: everyone was nervous, but we did it well. Got a lot of useful advice from BGV!

Pitch was terrifying but rewarding.

Previously, Fred had experimented with tempering the industry experts' feedback but the results had not been good.

On the first workshop I was a bit nervous about the students' resilience, so I took the guys from Mother aside before they heard the first student pitches and basically said, 'be nice - don't give them both barrels, they're only students'. Afterwards several of the students remarked on it: they said that they thought they'd been handled with kid gloves and it wasn't as useful as getting full-on honest feedback. And they were so right. So now I just get out

off the way and prepare to pick up the pieces if I need to: usually the students step up and take it on the chin, and the projects always get better.

Fred

One visiting expert Will Hudson (It's Nice That) pointed out that it is vital for students to be able to critically evaluate feedback, and not just take it all at face value:

It's not just 'right, I now need to go and do exactly that' – you have to think about it, to go 'right, that's an interesting way of looking at something. If I was to do that maybe this would happen, or I'd have to change this way of working, which I enjoy, but actually doesn't work'.

Will Hudson

From previous experience, the pod leaders knew there would be cases where critical feedback knocked the students. They were ready to provide support and reassurance, sharing accounts of their own experiences. Some of the student comments captured the difficulties of receiving feedback:

Tough feedback but we kept our heads up and tried to make the best of it.

Felt really let down after the crit. The guys were asking us what we can realistically produce in the next few days and that question made us think...

I couldn't speak and froze whilst pitching (not usually me) - then we found out that our idea had already been done – stress.

But students also appreciated the opportunity to share their work with professionals from outside UAL:

Massive designers that I look up to crit-ed my work! It was a huge achievement and reassuring to see the confidence they had in us students

We were motivated to improve our pitch from the previous day: great to get feedback from an outside organization.

It builds confidence to have to pitch in person to real organizations.

This intense flow of daily feedback was clearly a powerfully positive experience, something that the students subsequently recognised as such for themselves.

Employability and Enterprise

One of the main intentions of the workshop was to prepare students for the workplace, and immersing them in a fast-paced environment similar to the one they will experience when they enter the creative industries was central to this.

This is the pace of work in the creative industries - it's a privilege to work in the creative industries, but the trade off is that you don't get to clock off at 5. The workshop is designed to let students sample this, and see if they like it.

Fred

For almost all the students working at this pace was a shock, but one that they grew to appreciate.

I now work well doing projects in short amounts of time, I've discovered that I love quick-fire thinking to get the ball rolling - you'll have some rubbish ideas that you throw away, but you'll also have some really good ideas coming out of it. And I think that's how the industry works as well, so the workshop prepares you for that.

On the final feedback day, Fred pointed out to the students that after they graduate, most of them will have three key choices:

Be an employee	Where you can also learn how to run your own business by observing your employer
Be a freelancer	Experience a wide range of possibilities and develop your own self-sufficiency
Start a studio	Come together with a group of friends to generate your own projects and/or pitch for client work

Although the workshop was more geared towards the second and third options, it gave students a better chance of gaining employment whatever

they decide is right for them. As an exercise in preparing students for a meaningful career, the workshop was not only about developing practical digital skills, although this was an important aspect. It was also about cultivating broader traits and 'soft skills'. This reflects a view of education that wants to enable students to have a meaningful working life, rather than churning out a productive but unfulfilled, or worse still, exploited labour force. As Martin Haigh and Dr. Valerie Clifford put it:

There is more to life than simply doing a job. The graduates of our higher education system will be more than employees/employers, they will also be future leaders in our world and our neighbours and so affect our lives at all levels.

Martin Haigh and Dr Valerie Clifford, 2010

Clearly, teaching students a specific skill and encouraging mastery of that skill is an essential part of any education, creative or otherwise. Indeed, arriving equipped with such a skill is a prerequisite for taking part in this workshop: given its cross-disciplinary agenda students who have mastered their respective disciplines are essential. However, if they are to enter the workplace with confidence on graduation, students need to compliment these core skillsets with broader traits, such as:

- Pro-activity
- Passion for their subject
- An awareness of the world around them
- Confidence (not arrogance)
- A hunger and sense of responsibility for learning



Mood boards.
Pitch.

Modual workshop day four: 07/11/2016

Will Hudson pointed out that it is also important to have the right work ethic and personality.

You can be the world's greatest designer, but if you're bit of a dick no one's going to want to spend time with you. You don't have to be the world's greatest designer, but if you're up for getting involved, contributing, staying late - but not staying late the whole time - you're a much more attractive proposition to those studios.

Will Hudson

Or as Rebecca put it:

You have to be willing to do anything. With a start-up company, it doesn't matter what job title you have, you should still be taking the bins out. You need to notice the things that need doing and then do them.

Rebecca, Pod Manager

Pro-activity is about students knowing that they have to make the meetings, jobs and commissions happen. It can be frustrating for agencies if staff contact them on students' behalf - agencies want students to take that kind of initiative for themselves.

I don't think people do just get picked up by chance – you've got to work out who the people are you think you should meet, who the people are that you want to show your work to, that you want to get in front of, so pro-activity is massive.

Will Hudson

Our challenge as educators is to develop pedagogy that will foster this kind of pro-activity. In this case the workshop's gradual shift from a strong structure that held the students and instructed them in what they would be doing for every hour of the day, to a far more open timetable that provided assistance when required but left planning and responsibility firmly in the hands of the project teams themselves, was a strategy that aimed to do just that.

Will spoke about the responsibility of creative agencies to support and develop their junior staff members and interns:

There's a danger that graduates think they need to be the finished article to walk into industry and go 'give me the brief' – but any agency or studio worth their salt identifies something in junior creatives and develops and nurtures them.

Will Hudson

This perspective suggests further possibilities for collaboration between academia and industry. Discussing future workshops with potential industry hosts, Fred has already been asked if some of the host agency's junior designers could participate and learn alongside students, a flattering request that suggests a hybrid model spawning many exciting new options.

Developing self-initiated projects and maintaining the motivation to complete and deliver them is a crucial skill. Will spoke to us about the enormous value of side projects:

Try and carve out that time to do side projects – things that reflect you much more, because at an interview, both for full-time jobs and for other things, it will come up. Those interests are the kind of things that will spawn jobs and opportunities. The power of side projects is enormous.

Will Hudson

Fred echoed this in his own advice to students:

You are way more employable if you can create your own projects and jobs. If you've created your own social enterprise, it's a great sell.

Fred

The students' complete ownership of their projects, albeit in collaboration with their fellow participants, was another crucial element in conveying the experience of creating a self-initiated project or start-up enterprise, and this sense of ownership was clearly very motivating. There is no doubt that the students demonstrated an impressive level of commitment to their projects, with some of them uploading their final pitch videos at 3am the night before the launch: this is testament to their dedication and determination. The direct experience of this level of commitment and the enormous gains it can bring will stand them in good stead when they enter the creative industries, whether as employees or entrepreneurs.

Matthew Lyall, who has experienced all three workshops, firstly as a student and then staff, spoke about the specific skills he gained as a result of his experience.

Fred's workshops have had a great impact on my career progression. Initially I incorporated their techniques into my masters education: they improved my idea generation skills and inspired me to set up workshops with other students to explore our projects in a collaborative way.

After university I discussed the workshop in various job interviews; collaboration and idea generation are important assets in the creative industry and my experience gave me a boost over other candidates. In my current role I have been running internal staff workshops specifically derived from Fred's model and have spearheaded an overhaul of creative processes in the agency – a career developing project.

The skills learnt from these workshops have been useful on many different projects throughout my career since leaving UAL and I expect to be using them for the foreseeable future.

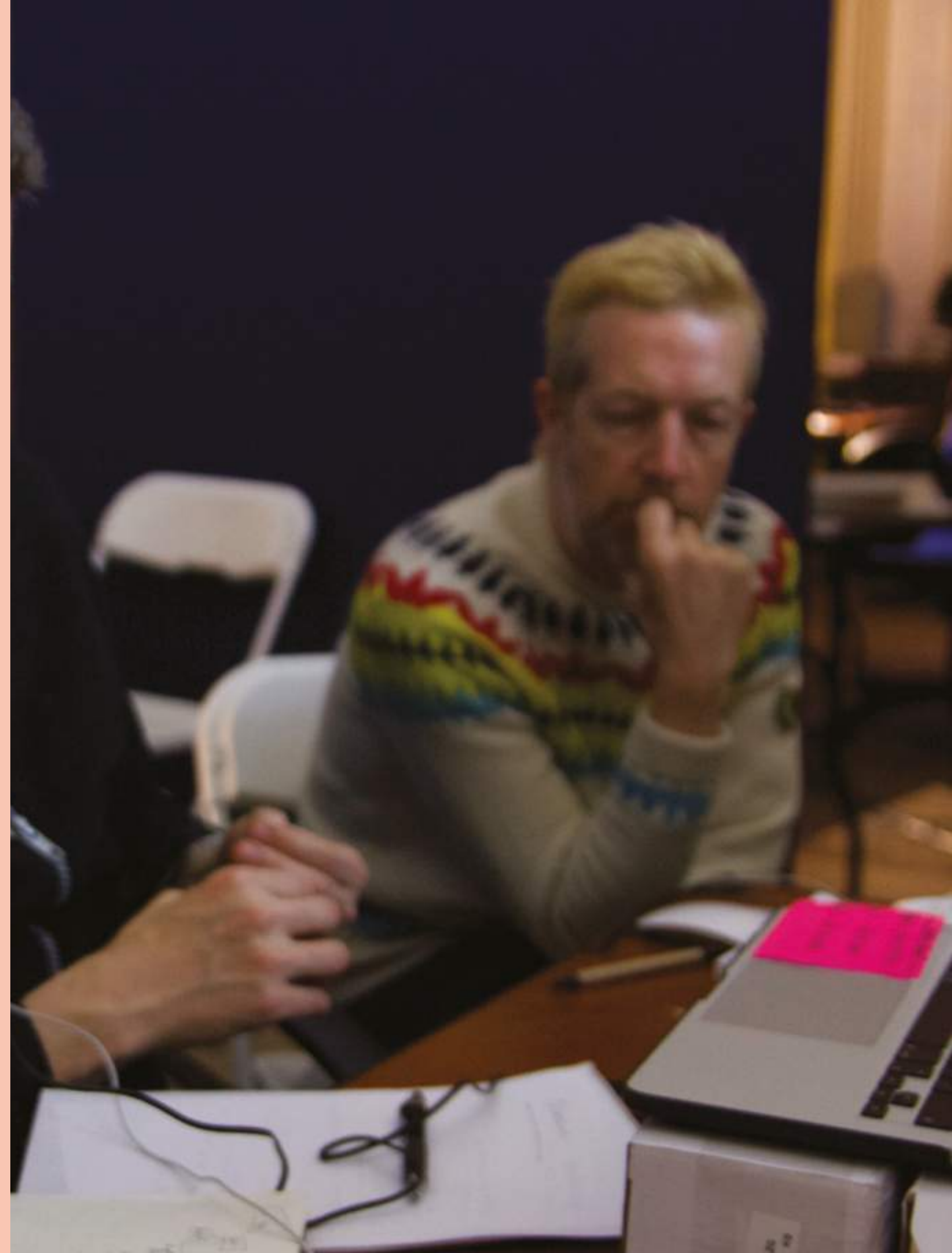
Matthew Lyall, Pod Manager

The journey that Matthew went through from workshop participant to pod leader and finally pod manager, and the positive impact that it has clearly had on his career, shows the potential for more complex levels of employability to be gained as a result of ongoing workshop participation.



#4 After The Dust Has Settled

Workshop Reflection





Feedback From Experts

During the workshops we were lucky enough to have leading industry experts come in to give lectures, crit the students' work and observe our teaching process in action. We caught up with three of them several months later to hear their thoughts.

Will Hudson

We've already heard from Will Hudson, Creative Director of It's Nice That, about employability: here he talks about his experience of participating in the workshop and delivering crits through Fuze. He said:

It totally blew my mind.

He felt that the best online pitches were the ones where the students just used one screen to present. In his opinion it was off-putting when there was a large group of students online but with only a couple of them speaking, and he suggested that all students should contribute if they are going to be in the Fuze room. However, he pointed out that an equivalent imbalance in contributions would be less noticeable in a face to face pitch.

Will said:

I don't think I gave as good feedback to the online groups, but from what I remember, I don't remember the work being as good. Maybe that's just the way it's presented – maybe it's a bad misconception from me but if they're not there in front of me it feels like they've not 'bothered'.

This suggests that it is quite difficult for students to create a strong impression of their projects online, and perhaps the online groups are disadvantaged in this regard. Some of the student feedback reflected this:

Pitching online is hard, one has to really dig deep and know your shit.

It's true that we rely on technology for a lot of the stuff we do but that doesn't mean the internet is reliable. The connection dropped out during a pitch which was very frustrating.

It could be that specific suggestions about online pitching would help - for example, nominating two people to do the pitch on behalf of the team.

Overall, Will said he was excited by the prospect of being able to work in this way, and that as a result of his participation It's Nice That were now looking into how they could facilitate feedback remotely in a similar way to how he experienced the use of Fuze at the workshop. This is a great example of how influence and inspiration can flow both ways between industry and education.

Daniel Charny

Daniel Charny, founder of the Maker Library Network and fixperts.org and Professor of Design at Kingston, came in to give a lecture to the students during the first week of the workshop. He felt that Fred's references to Somerset House and the people in the space helped to create a base where online students could be more engaged, more accepting and less distant.

He reflected that the presence of the cameras in the middle of the physical classroom created a challenge for the lecturers and speakers, who had to negotiate where to focus their attention:

I felt like the presence of the cameras in the middle made the people in the room actually become background to the people online sometimes, because when you're speaking or lecturing you're talking to the camera a lot, so there's a confusion of where to focus. The people in the space are there, so you start talking to them, and then you remember the ones on the screen and you look at them, and it's weird for the people in the room. There are borders of acceptance, and I think there are things to learn here about being in that parallel tech-physical environment.

Daniel has had extensive experience in this area, having devised a live online design masterclass programme in 2011, Parliament of Owls, which used web conferencing software OnSync. Run across 3 time zones and multiple locations, this project was challenging. Daniel said:

I'd say the percentage of time that we were 'in the zone' versus the times we were dealing with the presence of the technology was unbalanced and unsatisfactory, and this is what I found really interesting in Fred's workshop: the percentage of time that we were 'in the zone' was sufficient to make the experience really successful.

He felt that this user experience enabled the right balance between 'being in the zone' and being aware that there was technology underpinning what was happening. Daniel also commented on the use of Slack and its relationship to Fuze.

Slack as a means for online participants to reflect and offer questions without being under the duress of everyone looking at who's asking, gave them a massive advantage over the people in the big space who are really aware – especially at that age – of how they're speaking, how they're sitting, what they're wearing. All that is as important as what they're actually asking, because all the time there's this heightened mode of awareness and participation. Their motivations are as much social as they are about content.

I thought that in Fuze you had a good work dynamic in the rooms that was collaborative, participatory – it had a lot of great functions. When they moved into the big room, the fact that they lost their voice was a bit weird, but Slack compensated for that.

He reiterated others' observations that some of the best questions came from Slack, which clearly helps people connect at the levels of content and ideas by providing relief from these other social pressures. Slack's informality and visual nature provided a more casual context.

Especially in that mode of people reacting to images or messing about, it's actually a stronger contribution than a word or a question, so bringing that fluidity of graphics into the stream was really strong.

Daniel also observed that the multiplicity of broadcast channels available allowed students more opportunities to find a mode of communication that was right for them:

Some people find their voice in a certain group, so the multiplicity of channels allows more people to find the right area for them to interact in. Whereas when there is one channel – you know, Skype and comments, everyone sees all the comments – it's kind of restrictive and doesn't really fit everyone.

One challenge of working with Fuze was that it presents the teacher with the problem of not being able to gauge their audience so well, as they're not physically in the room.

As a teacher I want to know who I'm talking to, but maybe we have to drop the idea of that. When you step in as a guest lecturer, you often don't know the people. The technology amplifies this anti-personalised state, and I think that's something we still need to work on.

We asked Daniel Charny how this kind of workshop helps equip students for the creative industries. He said:

The teamwork aspect, which a lot of employers talk about being lacking in graduates, is prioritised here: experiencing and learning to engage in teamwork makes someone much more employable.

You gave students the ability to hone down and communicate an idea that they are personally, proactively engaged with. This is an entrepreneurial skill.

The presentation aspect is a very important skill - standing in front of a big daunting audience and explaining something that you care about. But more than that this workshop was trying to get people to do something - learning to convert ideas into action.

Students gained the perspective of understanding that you are part of a wider context as well as the empowerment aspect of networks. It's a sharing attitude that is, hopefully, part of the future economy that we will be working in or can work in.



Nat Hunter

Nat Hunter founded the Great Recovery project with Sophie Thomas when Director of Design at the Royal Society of the Arts. She is currently strategic director of the digital manufacturing facility Machines Room as well as a board member of CAST (Centre for the Acceleration of Social Technology) and partner on various research projects at the Royal College of Art.

Nat was present for much of the second workshop and talked about the change she saw in students as they took part.

The students transform in front of your eyes. On day one when they're asked to do their Pecha Kucha, they talk about themselves in a very one-dimensional way and it's not that interesting, but the second day is really exciting, when they're asked: "what do you care about?" The students I saw struggled to work out what they would change. At first they said "well, I'm a student, what can I do? I go out and I get drunk and I've got to get a job to earn money and pay the rent and pay back my loan" so they were really stuck in this one-dimensional view of the world. Then one of the women said, "my Dad's got MS and I think people with MS are amazing," and one of the guys said "Oh - I really hate all the gentrification that's going on in London." At that point there was a shift: they were coming from a different part of their experience. It's not design, it's not their practice, it's something that they care about when they're talking to their friends at the weekends: it's a whole different part of their lives.

And so for me there's something at that point that's really transformational. That process makes them feel like powerful people who can take things on in the world as opposed to what many people feel like when they leave university (I know I did!) that you're going out into this world that other people rule and you're not quite sure what the rules are and you've got to get a job but everyone's judging you. Actually the students at the end of this workshop weren't feeling that at all, they were ready to take the world on.

They'd also been exposed to the idea of starting up their own thing, that seed of: "if you don't find a job that you like then just go and do something for yourself." That's inspiring: sometimes people just have to be given permission to do that, and then they can go into the world, find a problem that they care about and spend their lives trying to solve that problem, building a business around it and doing great design work. That message is something that maybe those students hadn't heard before.

Nat reflected on her current experience of the creative community.

I think that there's a whole generation of people now who are realising that they can create value-driven work from a much younger age than my generation did. There's a whole culture of social enterprise, DSI (digital social innovation), tech for good, design for good, and currently it's not very integrated into the rest of the design world, but once you've experienced them they're so impactful that it's very hard to leave them. That world is full of people who have had the epiphany that you don't have to compromise your values for a creative career and as a result are doing amazing things.

I used to head up the RSA student design awards which has many of the same goals as this workshop. Students would be given briefs that would encourage them to solve real social and environmental problems: they'd come up with fantastic projects and win prizes and then they'd say: "where do we go now?" They'd look at the usual line-up of design companies to go and work for and none of those companies, product or graphic design, would clearly manifest the values that they'd got in touch with and wanted to live with. So a lot of those young people are now starting up their own enterprises, their own businesses.

Nat also reflected on the workshop's use of technology.

What was really interesting about this workshop was having the joint platforms of Slack and Fuze together, Fuze for the video and Slack for the messaging, which meant that there was a continuing thread throughout the entire digital experience. I've never seen that done before. Having Slack as the bedrock that Fuze sat on, that was transformational, because even if they couldn't get into the Fuze video call if, say, they were on the bus and the connection broke, they could still pick things up on Slack.

Another surprising thing was how much interaction happened on Slack outside of the workshop hours that you wouldn't normally have. For example Daniel Charny did his talk and then carried on chatting to the students afterwards on Slack all night. Obviously a deepening understanding of how best to use that technology happened over the period that the workshops were running.



The human interaction is really interesting. It seems that the experience wouldn't work without a pod leader chivvyng everyone along, creating that really held space. It would be interesting to see how much that could be removed, and whether people would self-organise if they were left alone. Maybe you should do an experiment where you have one pod without any kind of support!

The way that the ex-students step up to become pod leaders and that person then seeing the course from the other side of the fence, that can only serve to deepen their learning and understanding. They all loved doing that. Of course you're giving them much more employable skills, much more transferable skills, and increasung their confidence levels. Perhaps they should be paying to be pod leaders! Quite seriously! Then they get an extra certificate at the end.

Finally, Nat talked about the relationship between industry and academia and the transfer of knowledge and values between them.

I think there's a lag between what gets taught in art school and what's happening in the real world. We saw this very clearly back in the noughties when we were all out in industry building websites, understanding the wild west of the digital world and all the people who was still at university learning graphic design weren't given any digital skills at all. So there's this disconnect between what's going on in the real world and what's being taught in college.

When I talked to the students about the circular economy they were incredibly responsive to that idea and several projects ended up being very much about it. But they'd never heard it before, and this model has been really prevalent in the business and design world for at least three years so. Of course, some courses make an effort to connect with industry leaders and get those kind of ideas in but to have had three years of art school and not know about the circular economy is pretty poor, in my opinion.

The main driver in our culture is money: "you need to go and make money, money is safety, money is power." If people aren't exposed to other opinions and other values then they're never going to take them on, so it's really important that they get exposed to the latest developments around social enterprise, to the concept of starting your own business, and the big issues that are happening in the world. Yes, they do get some of that in their courses, depending on the discipline, but what the workshop was doing was bringing in industry leaders who are particularly relevant to these social, environmental and entrepreneurial issues and getting their perspectives. That isn't necessarily what people are getting at art school – most of them are probably getting a more craft or skills based education.



Feedback From Students

We caught up with five workshop students several months after the workshop to find out what long term benefits they felt they had gained as a result of their participation.

Looking back, how was the experience for you?

It was good to be doing something that was out of my comfort zone, so I am happy that I did it now that I am over the stress of it.

It's definitely rewarding to look back on it and know that it was possible for someone like me, with my more artistic background, who is more into concepts and things like that, to put myself out there and make an idea come to life in a different way.

Tabitha

I still think it was super good. I always repeat Fred's mantra when every project starts: "being both scared and excited is the best way to know you're doing the right thing" because it sums up everything. If you're not feeling both, then something's wrong, you should think about it more. I'm going to keep that for the rest of my life.

It installed a new confidence in me: I never thought I could make presentations that quickly and be able to speak to people like the guy from It's Nice That - it's quite a big deal.

Because it was so chilled and so well put together, it didn't feel crazy, it just felt normal by the end of it. I'm so glad it happened – I'm lucky to have been a part of it.

Abbie

It was really useful because the moment we went back to uni, we had a collaborative unit and six of us had done the workshop: it was so much easier to cope, to apply the strategies we'd learnt back into our course.

We saw other groups on the unit struggle with certain things, especially being efficient with their project, and we were kind of sneakily saying "Oh God we have all these techniques now that we can use that make it easy for us."

I was really impressed with the way it was put together. I'd never worked with digital technology in that way, being able to attend the workshop and engage so much, even though we were not physically in

the room, it was really interesting. It changed my outlook on how you can collaborate: if you're stuck in a city and you want to collaborate worldwide, that's easy now, but you don't realise it until you experience it.

Bel

It was my first insight into making something in such a short period of time. Before that I'd been doing quite long projects, and seeing the achievement of being able to make something in three or four days, having it made in 3D as well, and the video to go with it - it was fantastic, I was so shocked!

The stuff on how to work collaboratively was really helpful. Obviously we all came from different backgrounds: we had people from sustainable design, crafts, digital media, so all very different, but using the hat strategy or "what would you do if you couldn't fail" made us bring all our ideas together and be on the same page. From there we could go back to our different creative processes and then bring them together.

Presentation skills are obviously a big part of how you work and you don't necessarily get to practice that at uni. Presenting on screen was something that I'd never done before. To have such a close insight into presenting to industry was great.

Kassy

Are you still feeling the impact of the workshop - have you experienced a change in your practice (or life) as a result?

I tend to be a perfectionist, and it takes a long time for me to do something and then put it out there. The minimum viable product idea, which I hadn't come across previously, changed my practice because it's good to just do things, put it out there first, as opposed to processing it too much. That's changed things for me.

Now I know that it's possible to put my ideas out there and to pitch to people who have much greater experience than I have. It's good to know that I can articulate an idea clearly.

Tabitha

We had a project recently where we had to do a presentation for the Dean, and straight away I was like "I know how to do presentations now, let me just take hold of it," and one of the main things in our feedback was that we had a really good presentation. That's when I was thinking "these skills are coming in handy for sure."

Abbie



When I speak to people that I did the workshop with we're still kind of raving about it - it's left a lasting impression.

Right now I'm working on various projects directly related to the workshop: some of them are actually with contacts that I made there. One of them is in the US, the other one is in Australia, and I think the workshop gave me the confidence that we can make it happen remotely. That's something that I would have ruled out a year ago.

Henrique

As a designer you can get stuck in a routine and an idea won't be going anywhere. But to have those strategies in place, it really does make a difference. Just being able to make ideas bigger and seeing how far you can stretch them, because the further you stretch ideas the better they get. It's much easier reining in big ideas than having small ideas.

Kassy

Can you recall how you felt at the beginning compared to the end?

I was really nervous before I started because I was with completely different people from university. Once we got into the flow of it, every day when I came home - but most of the time I was at home! - I was telling everyone what we'd done that day and my Dad was really impressed.

I'm so glad it was not as nerve-racking as I'd thought. As soon as Fred started talking and people started chipping in you could feel the tension and nervousness was gone and afterwards it was great.

Abbie

First impression - absolutely terrified. The workshop was not the sort of thing I would have usually done, because I usually do projects that are personal and don't have an impact on something wider than myself. Towards the end I experienced the importance of that first-hand.

Also it was a bit of a confidence boost, because the kinds of things you had to do forced you out of your comfort zone completely, and by the end of it you realise, "you know actually, these things that I thought I might not ever be able to do, I actually can do them and the only thing stopping me is a fear of failure."

Bel

At the beginning there was a lot of curiosity to see how things would unfold, and that made it exciting, not knowing exactly where we were going to go each day. We only knew that we were all working remotely and that we would have lectures with Fred. By the end it all came together, and we felt that we were part of the whole thing, we were in on the experience. So that change from not knowing much, to knowing everything: that made it really special.

I came into the workshop with plans of eventually opening my own design studio and coming up with little start-ups or ideas, and making them a reality. In the beginning of the workshop I wasn't sure how that was going to fit in but by the end, we could see that the staff were just guiding us and that we were making it all happen pretty much on our own: with their guidance for sure, but the fact was that we created these projects from start to finish, ending up with a complete product that we could pitch to other people outside of the workshop. We made this a reality, so it gave me confidence to now go on and do a lot more of that stuff.

Henrique

A lot of us thought "this isn't going to work, we're going to have loads of connection problems," and to be fair at the start, there were, but by the end we just wanted to stay on Fuze and Slack forever. We kept messaging on Slack and we didn't want to let go! Communication-wise it proves that, obviously it's great to meet up, but to have that technology away from the place you're working is just fantastic. For example, being able to see the crits and the presentations we had from people within the industry, to see that from Falmouth on the screen and then have the chance to answer questions via Slack, you wouldn't think that would have been possible a few years ago so it was really exciting.

Kassy

Will taking part have an impact on applying for and getting future work?

I will definitely put down on my CV that I've had this experience; I think that's very important. Also now I'm much more able to talk about whatever work I've done, to do that clearly: I think that's something art students tend to have trouble with.

Tabitha

For sure. Having those big industry guys come in and being on the same level as you, that really made a big difference. Instead of thinking "oh my God, I'm emailing the guy from It's Nice That," he was right there and willing to listen, so I felt more confident in saying exactly what I wanted to say. I've approached various industry people recently, and it's been a lot easier chatting to them if I need help, or if I want to interview them.

It's another skill to add to everything. You can be the best designer, but if you can't work with people and you can't think on the spot you're not going to be alright. Because the workshop was so fast, it was so intense, it makes you think; you have to act upon stuff, like "do it, see if it works, if it doesn't then scrap it, move on to the next one." You have to keep that pace up, and then you produce the most and, usually, the best work. That's what people are looking for if they want to hire you, so I think it's definitely improved my chances.

Abbie

One really great thing about the workshop was the fact that we had to pitch every day. I remember at the start that was incredibly difficult: whether you were in the room or you were pitching digitally, it was the fear of "Oh my God, what am I going to say, how am I going to pitch this right, how am I going to adapt what I'm saying to the different audiences that we have?" I think that's a really great skill to have and something that I'll use later on to get jobs.

Bel

I know it has helped, because it made me more entrepreneurial. Having that confidence, by myself or in a team, to take something from the beginning to the end: when I'm talking in an interview or going for a prospective job, that's going to give me the confidence to know that I can make it happen.

I actually did have an informal interview with someone recently and I was explaining to them what the workshop was and they were excited to

hear about it. I think it sounded a lot more exciting to them than saying, "I've just finished my Masters." There's a weight to that, and it looks great and I learnt a lot, but explaining what the workshop was, it sounds really interesting to a prospective employer.

Henrique

I've already had some internship requests and they asked me about things I'd been involved with and they thought that the workshop was a really valuable thing to have. It just shows that I am really interested in design and ideas, and that I would do pretty much anything to get involved outside of uni: they really valued that. Also to see that I produced 3D objects and had a working video within the final 3 days: they were pretty amazed. I think it definitely helps in interviews, explaining how we used the technology and our creative processes.

Kassy

Do you think this kind of experience would be beneficial for other students? If so, how?

Yes, absolutely, because more often than not in educational institutions there isn't that link with reality so much. When we're given deadlines at uni you don't get a real sense of what is actually demanded of you in the workspace and how much responsibility you really need to step up to.

Also having access to people who have actually done it and can talk about how they've managed to make their ideas become reality is incredibly important.

It should be rolled out across the UK and beyond. I think now more than ever, there needs to be that theoretical and practical combination. Because it seems it's all about experience when it comes to applying for jobs, it seems to be what they want more than anything.

Tabitha

It broke down the whole idea of different classes or different universities. The girls I worked with, one of them was 28 and one was 26, I'm only 19, and we didn't even realise that until the last day, so it makes you think about the people you could work with in the future.

It'd be cool to see someone like my dad do something like this, because he's creative but he's not in a creative job, so it would be great to see what he would come up with. You could have a kid version, that would be super-fun; they don't have any boundaries already when it comes with working



with each other. You could take it anywhere I think. And I think you should: it was such fun.

Abbie

I keep wanting to take this stuff beyond the workshop, all the stuff that is enriching to yourself as a person, as a practitioner.

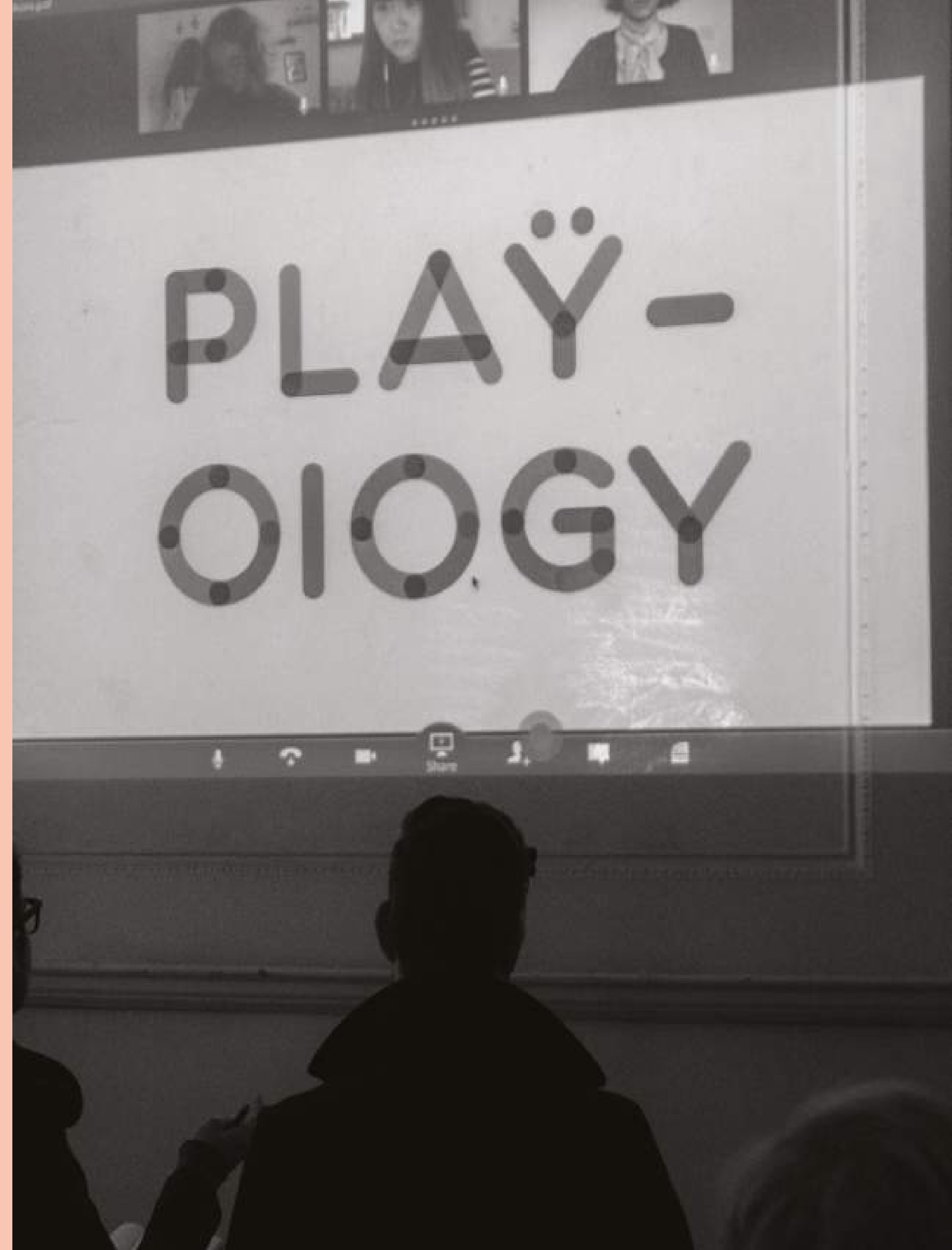
Also this funny distinction I now make, certainly for my class, between the people who had done the workshop and the people who hadn't. All the projects were really good, but after the workshop it was the process, the struggle of getting there, that got easier.

Bel

If I'm a freelancer or I'm not sure that I want to do a one or two-year Master's, this workshop would be a great thing to do. I think sometimes we go and do a Master's when we want to be able to realise our own projects, but a Master's doesn't necessarily teach you how to do that.

The industry is changing: there's now a lot more value in being able to come up with your own ideas and execute them than just knowing how to do things. In an age when a lot of stuff is becoming automated, I think at some points robots are going to be able to do a lot of what we do, so I think if we want to stay ahead and employable we should be able to think outside the box. Maybe something like this workshop is what a lot of us are looking for.

Henrique





#5 To Infinity And Beyond

Looking Forward



Conclusions

We hope this report has provided practical and conceptual insights into teaching professional creative practice in a post-digital world. We have seen that in this digital environment, it can be easy to focus on technologies, especially when they are slick, compelling, and fun to use. However, technologies are ‘replaceable’ tools and any approach should be platform agnostic: alternatives to Slack or Fuze could work just as well, and teaching staff should use whatever tools that make their initiatives most effective. What is not replaceable is a strong teaching philosophy. In these workshops, it was the peer environment and working ethos embodied in the workshop design, and enabled by Slack and Fuze that was transformative for students.

It is clear that ‘online’ isn’t one easily definable space. For example, these workshops used both inwardly facing, ‘bounded’ social technologies (Slack and Fuze), and outwardly facing corporate social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) at various stages. Slack and Fuze are profoundly different technologies that enable very different kinds of behaviours: Slack allowed some students and staff to feel liberated from certain social pressures and we saw that it can be easier to type a question or comment into Slack than ask it in person, especially in a public context as when in the audience during a talk. The use of webcams presents distinct challenges for staff, who need to negotiate a new technological/physical environment. It also raises questions about the ethics of ‘lurking’, and invites further investigation into self-perception and self-consciousness amongst students.

Some activities work better online, others face to face. Slack and Fuze were good for organization, planning and feedback, but seemed to inhibit creativity when it came to tasks such as making moodboards. The physical space and face to face interaction was important for actual making, prototyping, some aspects of team building and communication. Clearly, the liberating aspects of the online experience depend on the kind of technology being used, the activity being undertaken, and the context.

Although we have emphasised the notion of the ‘post-digital’, non-networked digital capabilities are still fundamental for creative practitioners. For example, learning about video production was a very steep learning curve for many participants. This is further evidence that the concept of the ‘digital native’ is a myth. Today’s students are quick learners but on the whole come equipped with very few digital skills: indeed most of them are as intimidated by the digital world as the generations above them.

Having spoken to several students after the workshop, it was clear that a significant personal transformation had taken place. They did not talk about ‘skills’, but emphasised the ways the workshop had transformed them on a personal level, or in terms of practice. They had gained confidence and were continuing to use the processes they learned in their own contexts. This demonstrates that this workshop model generates an ongoing transformation, impacting participants at a deeper human level as well as equipping them with practical skills necessary for future employment.

These workshops bring the language of social media into an academic context. We have observed the emergence of ‘positive digital addiction’, where students are strongly compelled to engage in an intensive period of digital communication with peers in order to achieve their goals. While we see this as a way to make what we are doing attractive to students, complicity with corporate social media or other corporate technologies is not our intention. Rather, the emphasis on using social technologies for social change is a way to engage with the digital space critically and reflectively, as creators rather than consumers.

Recommendations

Embrace agile practices (e.g. sprints and rapid prototyping) to develop new pedagogy

Educators must be able to experiment boldly and develop more of these innovative digital/blended learning projects, echoing the agile practices we seek to embed in our graduates, and thus leading by example. These experiments should be systematically supported by institutions just as UAL supported this project, through funding, resources, trust, freedom to fail and other internal approval. This needs to happen if the UK's creative industries are to maintain their dominance in an increasingly digital landscape.

Experiment with future permutations of this workshop model

Up until now these workshops have focussed on BA and MA students but future iterations could be aimed at other audiences and subject areas. For example, running these workshops for academic or technical staff could be an effective way of embedding these practices. Other versions could explore various formats with even higher online engagement (perhaps 100%), further geographical reach (developing the nationwide collaboration started here and extending it to a global one), new disciplines (partnering with appropriate industry hosts to explore diverse subject areas) and further audience reach (broadcasting content beyond workshop participants to a wider online audience).

Explore scaling this workshop model

These experimental iterations have necessarily been somewhat expensive, needing contingency as an essential ingredient due to the unpredictable nature of the area we have been exploring. However, by the third workshop our costs were coming out at around £500 per student for a two week course which is becoming more reasonable. In addition, this model could lend itself to further expansion: four pods are sustainable, so would more be possible? There is a clearly a commercial opportunity to be explored here.

Support potential enterprises generated by these workshops

The additional value that the projects generated could have to their student creators as potential entrepreneurs as well as to industry partners and universities themselves should be explored further. The example of Hook Up UAL, which is now developing into an official online resource for UAL in a remarkable act of genuine student-institution co-creation, is but one possibility. Many of these projects are viable as businesses and a clearer link up with enterprise departments and investors to support these ventures is an obvious way forward.

Develop education's 'positive change' agenda

The urge to design with positive change in mind is a transformative one that gives students motivation and purpose, making them happier human beings in the process. This urge should not be assumed to exist already: indeed, the reverse currently seems to be the case for the majority of our student body. Our future graduates are potentially powerful forces for social good but this instinct must be nurtured and cannot be taken for granted.

Disseminate emerging findings to other practitioners

Harvesting the innovation generated by these educational experiments is clearly highly desirable. This report is an attempt to do this: hopefully fellow educators will be able to take some of these processes and integrate them into their curricula as a result. However, moving forward, formalising this dissemination process is clearly essential to maximise the benefit to institutions and practitioners.

Publish openly online whenever possible

Students reacted very favourably to seeing their work and themselves online, regardless of audience figures. Our workshop account's 72,000 Twitter impressions motivated them highly but no more than the few hundreds of views their own project Twitter accounts generated (and perhaps less so). Helping them make their educational experience part of the wider digital conversation was welcomed, easy to achieve and very effective.

Incorporate teaching of 'soft skills' to prepare graduates for the workplace

In feedback students were very enthusiastic about the 'soft skills' they developed during the workshop and the impact they made on their employability. If we are to truly prepare our graduates for the workplace then these attributes cannot be ignored, and industry feedback only emphasises this. Professional skills such as presenting, pitching, active listening, giving feedback, punctuality, initiative and commitment need to be explicitly prioritised and delivered to students as prerequisites for employability.

Partner with industry to develop new pedagogy

Developing more profound and innovative ways for educational institutions to collaborate with industry is not only powerful for students but industry alike. These channels of communication are vital if we are going to understand and nurture the qualities and skills that industry are looking for. The enthusiasm and willingness that our invited experts demonstrated throughout their participation is indicative of the potential of this huge and relatively untapped resource.

Partner with students to develop new pedagogy and services

The co-creation of these workshops in partnership with students is a powerful factor in generating the motivation and loyalty that they have inspired. This spirit has also crossed over into the projects themselves, shown by the various solutions proposed to address the university's needs. Again, this is a comparatively unexplored opportunity: formalising and streamlining this process seems highly desirable for all parties.



Closing remarks

The notion of a current generation of young ‘digital natives’ who inherently understand the internet with all its culture, grammar and protocols, and who can effortlessly create innovative digital content and projects in ways that their teachers could never understand, is now acknowledged as simply a paranoid myth, as established by the 2015 UAL Digital Student Experience report among many others (for example Danah Boyd in her book *It’s Complicated: The Social Lives Of Networked Teens*). The vast majority of our students have been hypnotised into passive consumerism by digital corporates and are far from confident about exploring and innovating in this space. Their little brothers and sisters may be another matter, given that initiatives such as Code Club are now rolling out across the UK’s primary schools, and so this current generation may soon be faced with a generation gap that dwarfs the one between us and them. However I suspect that these digital corporates will be working hard to keep future generations glued to their devices and tapping revenue-generating links as long as possible.

We need to encourage our students to get their digital hands dirty and, as always, the best way to do that is through example. We are competing with the likes of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for our students’ attention, all globally successful platforms which are continually designed and re-designed in order to be highly addictive and to feed into their enormously successful business models. Our educational user interactions must be as sticky and compelling as these competitors: the ‘productively addicted’ behaviour that has emerged during this workshop is just one example of this. We do not need to build new software platforms to achieve this: in fact we should avoid doing so. Nor are the platforms that we used in this case necessarily vastly better than their competitors: choosing the most appropriate software is certainly helpful but not the main task at hand. Rather, we should be developing profound user experiences with our students’ needs at their heart, using whatever tools are right for the job and embedding agility and adaptability into these experiences as a matter of course. Excellent though they are, I would not hesitate to use alternative tools to Slack and Fuze should better options emerge: indeed I am expecting new functionality to arrive on a regular basis, as it has done regularly and with increasing rapidity for the past decade.

The MOOC format is a powerful phenomenon that should be praised, but it has been most effective when teaching in more binary areas where there are clearly established answers to any questions students might have.

It is easy to see how learning the basics of a language, a science, software and coding, playing a musical instrument or the facts of a specific period in history can be delivered very effectively online with pre-recorded material and semi-automated assessment. But the creative process, in whatever medium, is totally different. By its very nature it is nebulous and elusive, often only graspable through direct experience combined with dialogue and mentorship. Does this mean it is ‘unteachable’ using primarily digital tools? No, it does not. However, this does mean that delivering a digital creative education experience requires far more subtlety and expertise than many other subjects and as a result this space is comparatively underpopulated, which I believe offers an enormous opportunity. A hierarchical top-down binary system with rigid delivery methods and assessment metrics is clearly an old model that the digital shift is taking us and the world at large away from. The fluid context of an arts school is inherently suited to the new paradigms that are being embraced online and as a result there are incredible opportunities for us as arts educators.

These emerging new paradigms clearly point to a devolved matrix of co-created interactions rather than more traditional top-down hierarchies and I believe the complex range of student-to-teacher and student-to-student interactions that became visible during the course of this workshop mirror this emergence. The shift from binary to holistic, from digital or analogue to a genuine hybrid of both, from MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) to SPOC (Small Private Online Course) and (possibly most importantly) from individual to collaborative and from personal to global are all clearly evident in our findings and encourage me to believe that we are on the right track, echoing as they do the trajectory of the digital shift that we currently find ourselves in the middle of.

In conclusion, I’ve found these experiments in digital pedagogy to be as creatively fulfilling as any of my other professional projects and am very grateful to the students, staff and industry colleagues who have made them possible. Far more importantly, I believe that the field of digital creative education is still a relatively unexplored one, full of exciting opportunities to generate major positive impact on the next generation of this country’s creative talent. I believe that these prototype ‘beta’ experiments have demonstrated this to be the case through the extensive and varied positive impact on student participants that has been described in this report. I look forward to exploring this uncharted territory even further in the near future and hope that you will be able to join me, whether as audience, supporter, contributor, colleague or participant.



Thank you

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Henrique Gheresi
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Liam Fay-Fright
– Common Industry
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– Common Industry

Hem Patel
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Christian Thumer
– Signal / Noise
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[Bethnalgreenventures.com](http://bethnalgreenventures.com)

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<http://dschool.stanford.edu/>

Design course at Goldsmiths

<http://www.gold.ac.uk/design/>

Fixperts

<http://fixperts.org/>

Hyper Island

<https://www.hyperisland.com/>

It's Nice That

<http://www.itsnicethat.com/>

Makerversity

makerversity.org/

Modual

<http://www.modual.org/>

Poke

<http://pokelondon.com/>

Semaphore London

<http://semaphorelondon.com/>

Unit X - Manchester School of Art

<https://projectunitx.wordpress.com/>

Appendicies



Appendix One

Modual and collaborative practices: some thoughts

A blog post by Bel Aguas

With a collaborative project coming up, I wanted to reflect upon my Modual experience. Prior to Modual, I had always approached collaborative work with reluctance. Coming from a Fashion Photography background, where collaboration is key to the success of any project (most shoots require teams of at least three to four people with different skill sets - photographer, model, make-up artist, stylist), this may come as a surprise, but I have always found group work difficult. Beyond the project itself, working as part of a group is a constant process of compromise and negotiation - of handling not only ideas and opinions, but also personalities. It's about trying to find a balance between efficiency and empathy (which is not always easy).

During Modual, I had the good fortune of ending up in a small group of likeminded individuals, which made the process not only infinitely more efficient, but also more enjoyable (and I got more out of it, both professionally and personally). I think the process of how the groups were put together - by looking for commonalities within our wider group - was vital here. Aside from establishing shared passions and interests, it gave the project its initial focus, which would develop, over the next few days, into our research question (how can we take advantage of a child-like mentality to get people who have lost their creative spark to re-engage with it?)

I found the sorting process interesting, also, because it took into account neither our professional backgrounds, nor our proficiency levels at specific skills, nor, even, if there was any overlap in our own personal visual language. Despite knowing from the start we would have to produce a kickstarter film to be shown at the launch, for example, (a medium none of us were particularly comfortable in) the focus was never in creating balanced groups. This was more positive than negative as it pushed all of

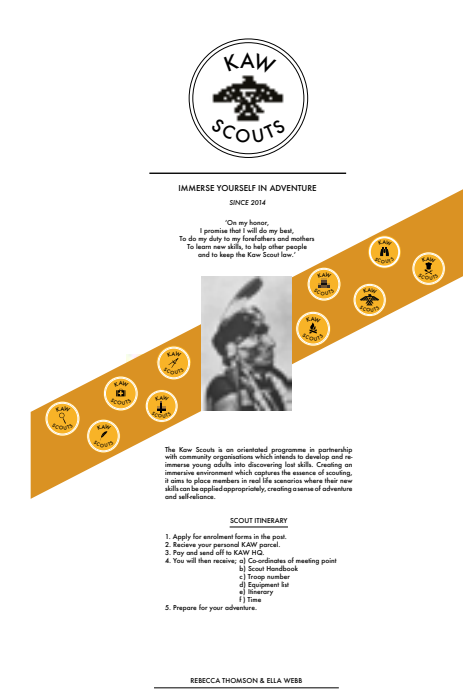
us to learn new skills (such as teaching myself some After Effects basics overnight to edit the film to a high-quality standard) in order to achieve a desired outcome, rather than being limited by what we could immediately do as illustrators and graphic designers.

With Modual, there was also the consideration of time. Because the workshop only runs for eight days, being able to communicate within the group and to meet deadlines became more important than ever. Having to pitch every day to different clients, showing progress from the day before, meant we had to develop a sound organisation system which considered the day's objectives, and the tasks we would individually be responsible for within the group (designing logos, mock-ups, conducting interviews and compiling information, generating and uploading social media content, etc). This system also allowed us to set aside enough time early in the day to prepare the content we would be presenting as part of every pitch.

When it came to generating content for the project itself, there were various techniques and methods we learnt throughout the workshop (such as using positive reiteration to further a concept, and Edward de Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' system for thinking critically about an idea's potential), which, as I approach my second collaborative project this year, I know I will find myself using.

On a final note, I would like to reflect upon what I have personally taken from this workshop. Despite Modual being the exact opposite of the sort of activities I usually embark on (individual, small-scale, painstakingly-considered long-term projects), I am both grateful and proud to have been a part of this workshop. Because of the way it was set up, I have learnt how to work faster, and produce high-quality results in a very compressed period of time, which I did not think myself capable of. I have also had to push myself technically, mentally, emotionally, and to trust myself to produce better work as a result of this. Furthermore, despite my initial reservations about working as part of a team, I have discovered the advantages of working with other creatives with completely different skills and personalities, of learning from them, of understanding the nature of our collaboration as one in which we simultaneously support and challenge each other to bring out the best of ourselves. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I have learned to design with a mind to positive change (rather than personal satisfaction), which I am eager to apply to future projects.

Appendix Two: Workshop Projects



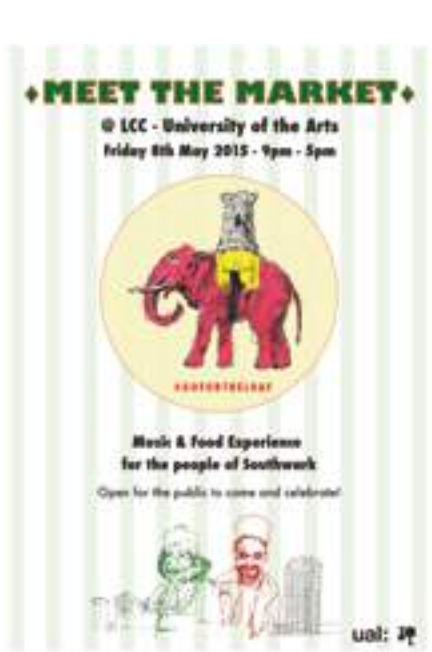
KAW SCOUTS
Rebecca Thomson, Ella Webb

An interactive theatre experience recreating the Scout movement for adults to reconnect them with nature.



GREENR
Matthew Lyall, Ezetie King, Jordan Gamble, Michel Erler, Taymah Anderson, Ella Hyvonen

An app to bring green spaces into every day urban life.



MEET THE MARKET
Alex Williams, Jack Smith, Natalie Mills, Rosie Allen, Ellis Van Der Does, Genoveva Ordonez

A campaign to support local traders by introducing them to LCC students.



ARTSHARE
Shanaz Byrne, Amy McCraith, Alexandra Sokolova, Alexandra Pinkhassov

A digital platform to enable students to collaborate across UAL.



MANUAL
Rania Svoronou, Nicolas Bruck, Linda Fedotova, Dragos Munteanu, Laura Fontes De Castro, Aurelien Richard, Manon Bournel- Bosson, Simona Ciocoiu

A social network for creative recycling.



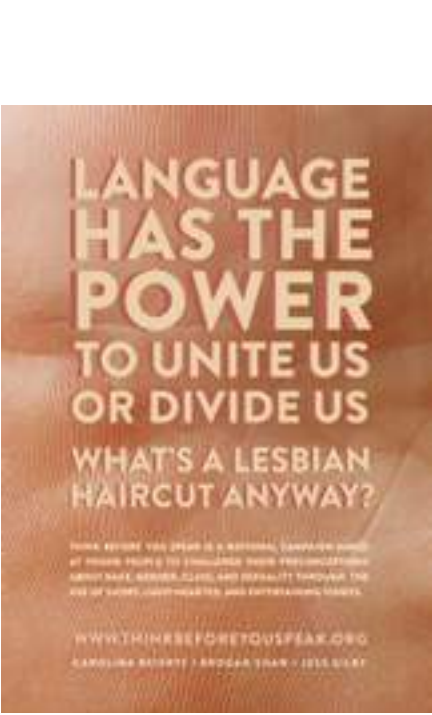
SAY SEX
Lea Turck, James Buell, Arthur Menezes, Anyaa Dev

A campaign to help young people talk about sexual issues honestly and frankly.



WEWEE
Sean Murphy, Chin Tan

An AirBnB-type digital resource for finding cool toilets.



THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK
Jess Gilby, Brogan Shaw, Carolina Beiertz

A campaign to raise awareness of the harm caused by verbal abuse.



TOTEAM
Adrian Sylejman, Dan Smith, Hannah Smith, Mark Williams

A device to reward productivity through treats.



BE A BEE
Gary Nip, Anna Smolovyk, Victoria Pickford, Claire Freeman

A campaign to raise awareness of the importance of bees to our ecology.



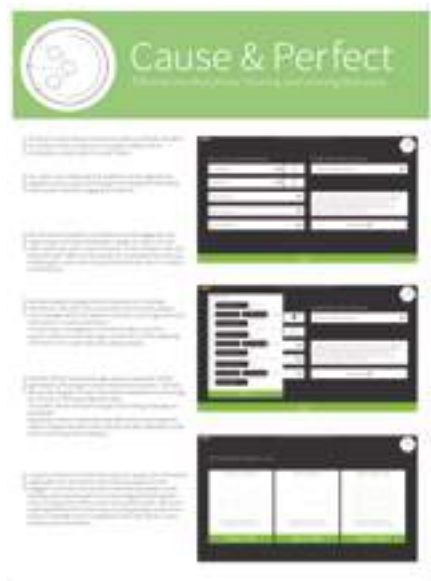
RECOIN
David Baker, Tommaso Cesaro, Ricco Martini, Jodie Newsum, Qian Qiu, Chermaine Koo

A cryptocurrency to reward recycling.



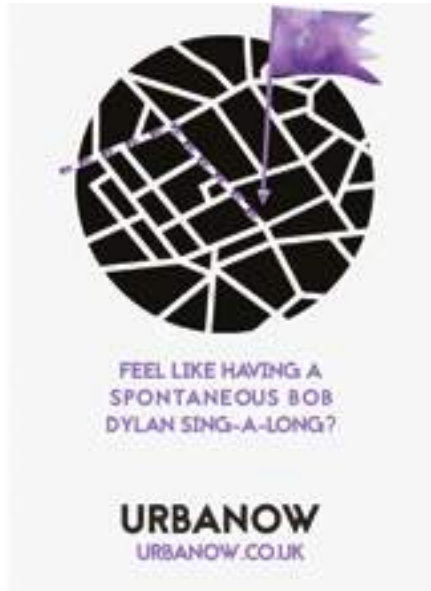
JUNGLE RESCUE
Kassy Bull, Charles Cattel-Killick

A story book with interactive elements to teach pre-school children about electronics.



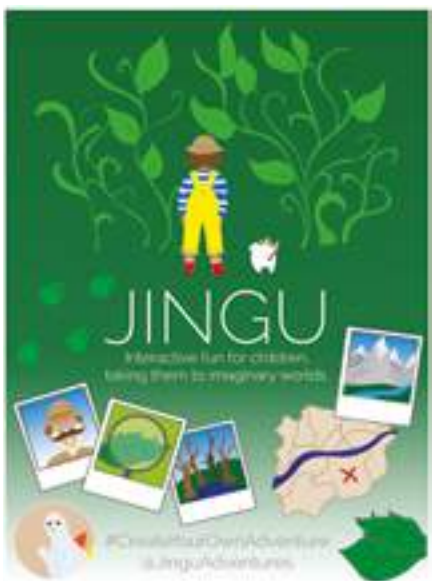
CAUSE AND PERFECT
Will Jackson, Tom Hesleth

A educational system based around themes rather than subjects.



URBAN NOW
Patrik Gerthofer, Maaria Tiensivu

A app to help users discover spontaneous performances in cities.



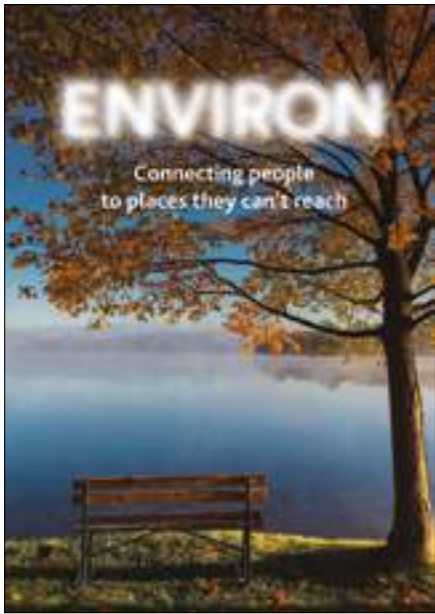
JINGU
Shannon Bartlett-Smith, James Slinn, Viil Coward, Rebecca Lalle

An interactive toy that creates online narratives.



CHECK
Sophie Minal, Marta Czaja, Vera Schmid, Aitor Fernandez,, Richard Voropayev, Lucio Martus

An app to help you achieve your once-in-a-lifetime experiences.



ENVIRON
Tabitha Haynes, Yuechen Jiang

A virtual environment experience for the disabled.



FABRICATORS
Hanna Kainulainen, Ho Ming Lam

A new way to sell second hand clothes with their previous history included.



HOOK UP UAL
Olga Bagaeva, Shaq Mahmood, Henrique Gherzi, Betty Sims-Hilditch, Griselda Ibarra

A digital platform to connect UAL students and alumni.



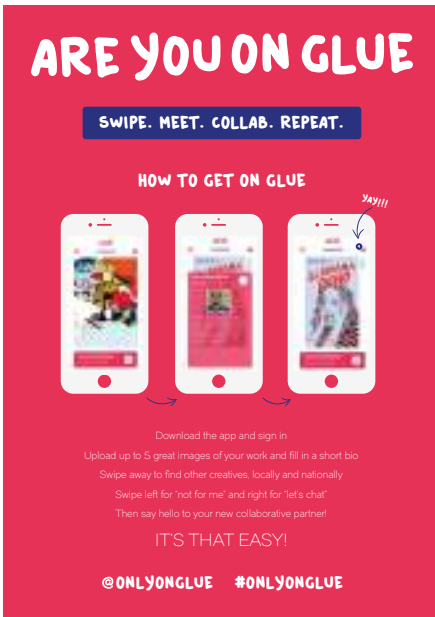
IDEABOX
Sophia Tai, Rohit Sharma, Pei Fen Ng

A service to harness children's knowledge and brain power to solve adult problems.



FOLO
Valeri Ox, JJ Gacheru, Gonzalo Caravia Garcia, Harry King-Riches, Ximena Martinez Moreno, Lila De La Vega

A party-finding app.



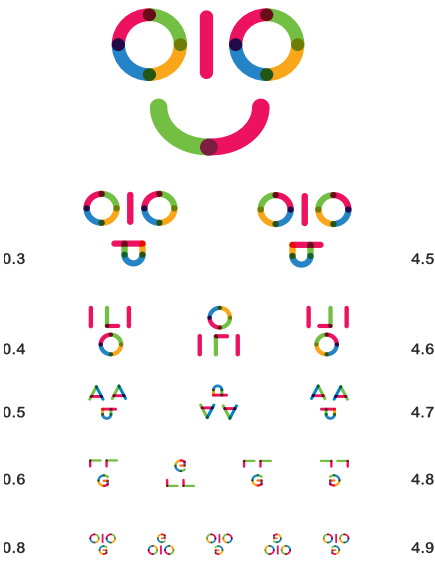
GLUE
Zipporah Burman, Orel Brodt, Kirstin Barnes, Adrian Gomez, Nike, Akintokun, Aimee Magee

A collaborative social network for artists.



MEET TO EAT
Abdullah Habib, Purvi Rathod, Ai Tomiki, Yae Jin Hong, Nima Hajirasoulhi

A digital platform for students to eat more healthily and socialise at the same time.



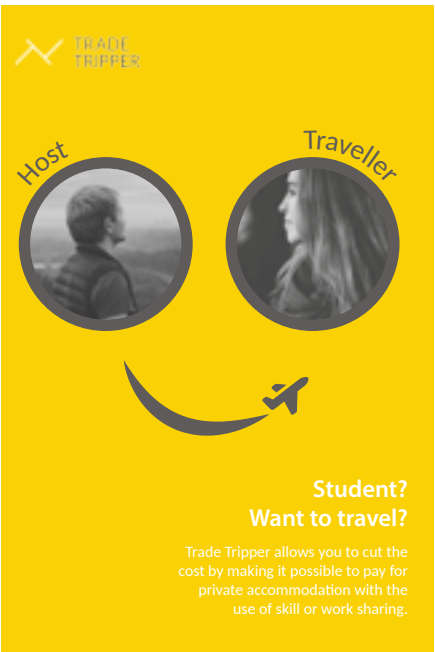
PLAYOLOGY
Bel Aguas Garcia, Peggy Wang, Abbie Freeman

A campaign to encourage adults to explore more child-like behaviour.



SOUVENIR
Kajsa Lilja, Naina Thada Magar, Guillaume Querard, Annabel Chua

A digital service to source the perfect gift from local artisans.



TRADE TRIPPER
Calvin Lok, Kim Liu, Priscilla Saggese, Olivia Bennett, Verishua Maddix

A digital platform to enable travellers to exchange work for accommodation.



VENTURETEERS
Saloni Dahake, Radan Al Qasemi, Greg Bailey, Luisa Charles,

A digital platform to encourage and support small scale volunteering by students and young people.



BIMBLE
Marta Monge, Mariana Salazar Riveros, Aaron Grey,

A device to encourage urban wandering.



Appendix Three

Four levels of creative digital engagement

Fred Deakin

In the course of working with a wide range of UAL students and exploring ways to extend their practice, I've developed a model of the various ways in which we engage creatively with the digital realm. The model is intended to be a useful tool to think about how we choose to generate creative content in the digital space and how that choice is constantly changing. Thinking about it as a two-way axis seems to be useful: when engaging with the digital space we move up and down between these levels and rarely stay in one operational mode for long.

Here they are.

Level One: Digital Consumers

This is the core functionality of the internet and the default mode for most of our digital activity, which is basically passive. We are all able to go on-line and operate at a basic level of competence to instantly access an enormous amount of information: watching a video, reading a newspaper, buying a cinema ticket, researching a subject, etc. We all now have an instinctive sense of what interactions we expect from a 'good' website: we should know where we are, not feel confused at any time and be able to complete our chosen task with speed and grace. If a website doesn't deliver this to us we will see the website at fault, not us: this is a crucial change from our pre-internet relationship with technology.

Also ubiquitous is the ability to create basic content online. Most of us have Facebook accounts and many of us interact with Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest on a daily basis. We can post comments on a forum or upload a video to Youtube with relative ease. This takes us towards the transition point into the next level.

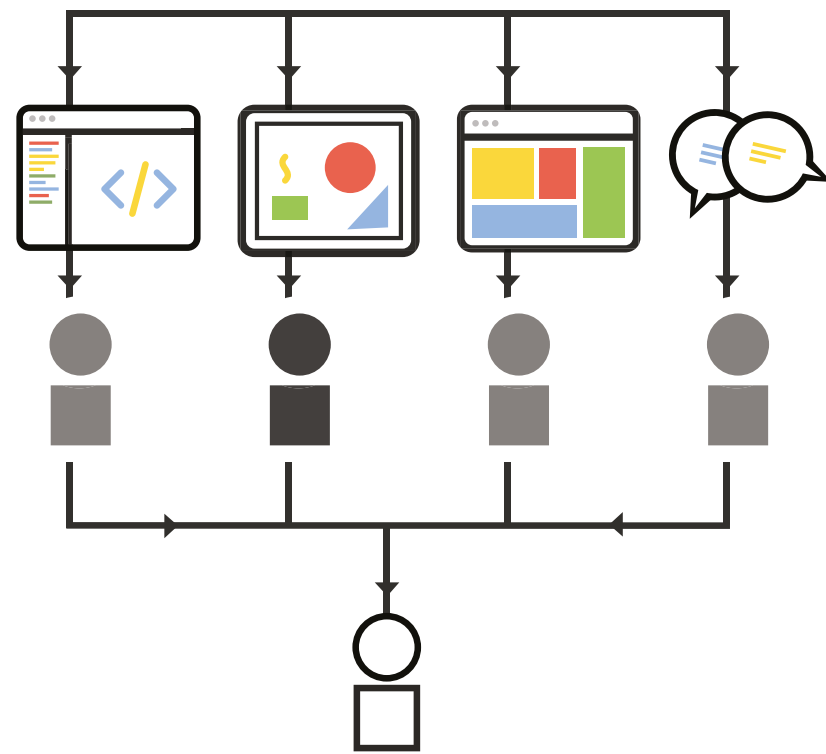


Level Two: Digital Creators



When we operate in this level we are generating relatively complex online content ourselves and using various off-the-shelf tools to do so. Creating a website from scratch is now a relatively easy thing to do: it may require a day or two of concentration but it is within the reach of most people. At entry level are platforms such as Squarespace and Cargo: Wordpress offers deeper levels of functionality for those who choose to explore further. But we don't have to create our own website at this level: we can use platforms such as Etsy to operate commercially, or use our old friends Facebook and Twitter in a more pro-active and less social way.

New 'code-less' platforms that empower us to generate interactive content are emerging on a regular basis: talent and effort is still needed to make the content compelling but the digital industries have identified these platforms as a potential area of revenue and it is safe to assume that these platforms will continue to emerge for the foreseeable future. This level is a relatively new one: it is democratising the web (as well as monetising it – a familiar transaction) and ironically has the potential to make a sector of the digital industries obsolete in the same way as it has done to other more traditional industries such as publishing and music.



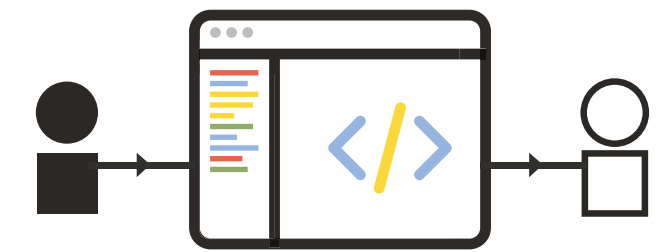
Level Three: Digital Collaborators

Imagine that an exciting new project has been conceived of: it's a major undertaking and the necessary resources have been obtained to make it a reality. This project is too complex and innovative to be delivered using existing platforms: moreover its complexity means that a multi-disciplinary team is needed to produce it that incorporates strategy, design, technology, psychology and other skills in order to be able to achieve excellence in the finished product.

If you are a part of this team and you are not primarily responsible for the technology portion of the project then you are operating at the level of a digital collaborator.

It will be important that you understand how digital technology works, for example the binary nature of code or Boolean logic: perhaps more specifically you might need to know the relationship between HTML, CSS and Javascript or the best way to deliver your part of the project's content so it can be incorporated into the final iteration without friction. Using IDEO's 'T-shaped designer' model, you need to have a basic understanding of coding / programming / technology as part of your horizontal cross-bar, even though it won't be the deep understanding of the specialism represented by your personal T's vertical bar. Similarly, others in your team should have the same 'cross-bar' understanding of your specialism: all of this will increase the likelihood of achieving a genuine 'ground-up' approach and the opportunity for powerful synergy within the team, and thus the chance of innovation and ultimately success for the final product.

Level Four: Digital Constructors



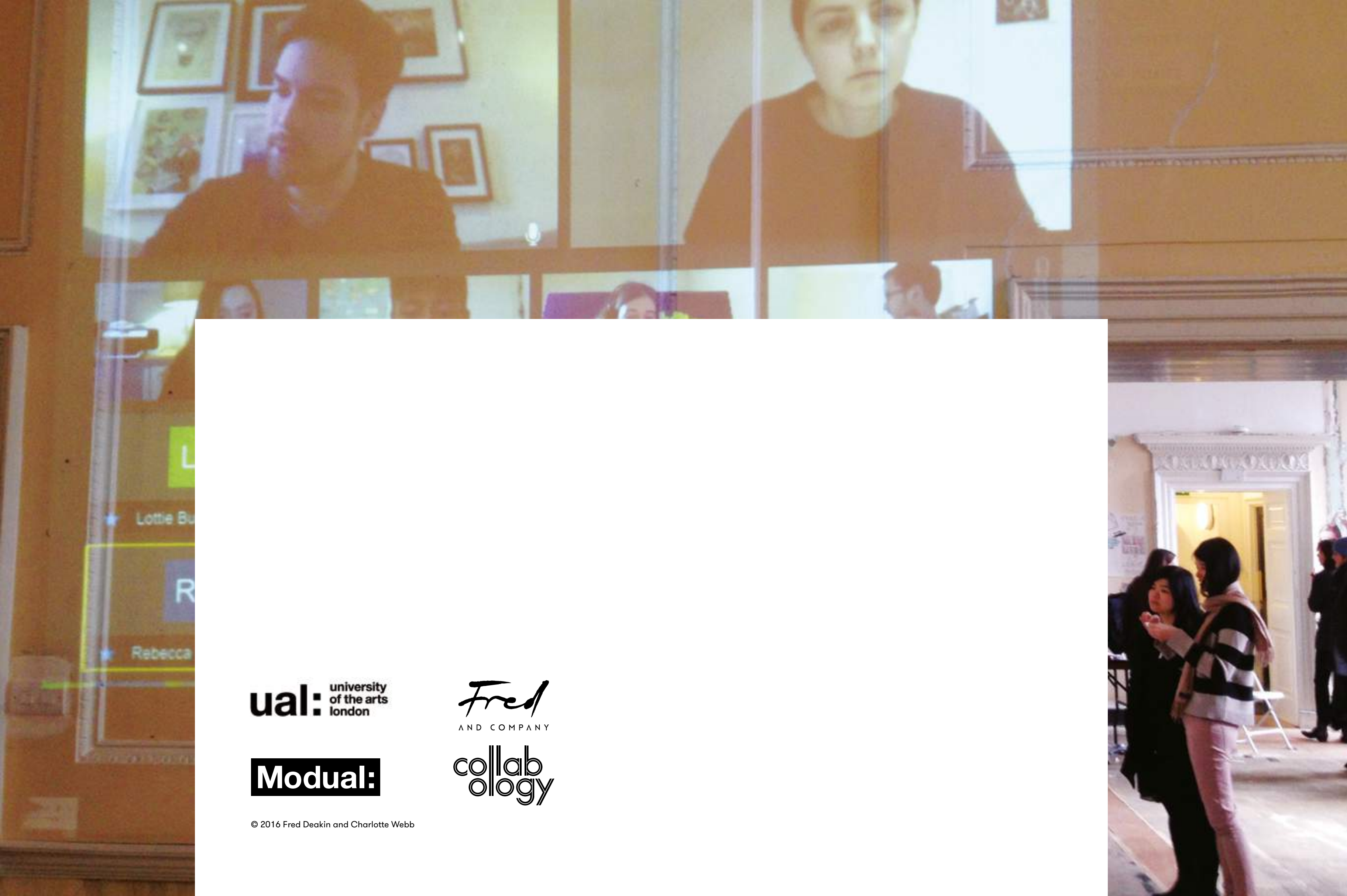
Operating at this level we can build complex digital resources from scratch: we are comfortable grappling with various aspects of emerging technology and have no issues going 'under the hood' to write and optimise code. This level returns to a more solo mode of operation after the collaborative nature of level three. Clearly everybody should experience level four for themselves for two reasons: firstly it will develop their capacity to operate in level three and secondly they might well discover that this skill is their core passion and something they want to develop as their main practice.

For me the most interesting levels are two and three. Level one is obviously going to take care of itself. Currently there is a great need for more engagement at level four: any student who hasn't dabbled with Programming or an Arduino should do so immediately, and if they then explore this field further then so much the better for their employability and this country's economy. The welcome introduction of Code Club and other similar initiatives into primary schools is a powerful solution to this need.

I believe we overlook level two somewhat, partly because it's somewhat unglamorous (it's easy to be snobby about off-the-shelf tools, e.g. Dreamweaver) and partly because it's relatively new. Much energy is currently being spent by various start-ups to find new ways to create user friendly paths to complex online functionality: for example, I've lost count of the number of platforms I've seen launched recently to create 'code-free' apps. This landscape is changing constantly and so exploring it requires an awareness of current possibilities as well as the confidence to navigate new interfaces. It also needs vision, commitment and skill to use these tools to produce anything of worth. Nonetheless I think that those of us who are not comfortable building complex digital projects alone from the ground up have a lot more power than we think, and that power is growing.

Level three is where I most enjoy operating in my professional life and where I think the most possibility for genuine innovation lies. It's the area where all creative digital studios work and the hardest one to prepare students for before graduation simply because it requires collaboration with a range of other people from different disciplines. Nonetheless I believe that developing new pedagogy grounded in this area is vital for the evolution of arts education in this country.





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Fred
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