

## TEAM WORK

There are three workshop plans included in this pack:

- Introducing team work
- Developing and selecting ideas in teams
- Running a review of the effectiveness of team working

**Additional notes** appear at the end of each workshop plan.

### Who this pack is for and what it contains

This pack is written for design tutors who plan some team work during their course and want to increase the likelihood that students have a positive experience of this way of working. The starting point in putting the pack together is that tutors can significantly improve team work by getting students to attend to how they work together, in addition to achieving the set tasks. Encouraging them to experiment with different ways of working together, - for example to research information, generate and select ideas, evaluate options and decide courses of action, increases motivation and can improve learning.

The pack outlines some simple team work PROCESSES. It suggests ways in which these can be explicitly and sequentially introduced to students in short workshop sessions run during the course of design projects. A SCRIPT has been provided for each, outlining what the tutor does, what the students do and what the outputs are at each stage. Suggestions for back-up visual material and NOTES are also included. The intention is that a tutor will be able to use the material, as it stands and with limited preparation, to experiment with a new way of working with student, later adapting and extending it to suit his or her own specific context.

### Why it helps to concentrate on the mechanics of team working?

It is often assumed that it is enough to put students in teams and let them get on with it. Through the experience of working together, it is argued, they will learn how to be effective teamworkers. But feedback from students suggests the reverse is true. Poor experiences early on in the course lead to a mistrust of teamworking and limited enthusiasm for team tasks. In the context of a future professional life where success will largely be based on effective teamwork, early bad experiences could be seen to lay some very weak foundations.

Many of the students entering UK universities will have come through the British secondary school system with its emphasis on individual achievement. Few of them will have much experience of working in teams. Time spent introducing team work methods to these new students, getting them to practise these in the context of the project and review their experience afterwards can lead to an acceptance of team work as a legitimate and valuable part of architectural education

as well as an essential preparation for working life. In addition, effective team working offers design tutors an invaluable way of managing increased student numbers.

## Guiding Principles

### **Introduce team working very early in the course:**

Getting students to work in teams early on means they get to know each other more quickly, establish themselves, share in a common activity and find something to which they can belong in the early stages of the course when everything is unfamiliar.

### **Introduce team skills as part of project work**

Team work skills are best introduced during the course of students' work on the design project rather than as a separate activity. For example, a workshop on how to generate and select ideas in teams was used to help students decide the questions they wanted to put to clients and users on a forthcoming project. Skills introduced in this way are immediately put into practice. They are seen to be effective and students are therefore more likely to use them in other situations.

### **Make team skills explicit**

Some students argue initially that team skills are 'natural' - you either have them or you don't. CUDE's feedback showed that, almost without exception, students felt that when they tried the processes introduced in the skills workshops, their teamwork became more productive and enjoyable. They said how much more they were able to achieve when they used the team to generate a whole list of ideas **before** discussing them, rather than rubbishing each other's ideas as they were suggested and setting up a vengeful hostility in the team.

For the tutor, making skills explicit means being able to describe clearly the team processes you want students to adopt and the reason why you want them to do this. Examples of how to do this are given in the workshop plans. It also means having very clear aims for each workshop session and making sure the students understand what these are.

### **Appropriate tasks**

Some tasks are better adapted to team work than others. It is important that the task selected is appropriate for team work and is something students can manage at this early stage of their career. Researching information is a good team task - the numbers of people involved allows a wider field to be explored. Building something together allows division of labour, shared pride in the product and the useful realisation that different people have different and complementary skills.

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Some examples of tasks worked on by 1st year student teams during the CUDE project:

- Researching and building a model of a specific twentieth century house.
- Planning the research needed to expand the brief for a pre school nursery, including investigating client and user needs and the views of nursery education specialists on nurseries in the future.
- Preparing questions to put to nursery clients and users.
- Sharing information gained from individual research enquiries.
- Agreeing how to record research findings collaboratively.
- Agreeing assessment criteria to be used in assessing both the team's research output and the effectiveness of their team working methods.

There were other benefits from these tasks. One example is the requirement to develop good verbal **communication skills**. Selecting information relevant to the hearer/listener, asking good questions, and checking that you have grasped what is intended are all vital preparation for the extensions of team work to include other disciplines later on in a course. **Planning** the work to be done and **agreeing responsibilities** for this are also key skills; typically, students tend not to plan - they simply begin! The discipline of having to agree with other people what is to be done, when and by whom extends into better individual time planning and helps students take responsibility for their own learning.

### Team size:

5 - 7 works best, allowing everybody to contribute. Teams with fewer than five members have the potential for 2 against 1 splits, and can fall apart if one member does not attend. Bigger teams are much harder for the students and tutors to manage. Students can get 'lost' without anyone noticing.

### Student allocation:

CUDE's experience shows teams work better if students are allocated to them by tutors, rather than allowing them to select their own. Some mix of academic background, previous experience, gender, nationality, enriches the potential of the team as a learning resource and goes some way to creating the 'balanced team' described by Belbin. Whilst self selection may result in some very strong groupings, a large proportion of students may be left out of this. (It's worth noting that we don't usually choose our teams once we are at work, so we may as well get into practice at university)

Note: Increased student numbers mean that sometimes several tutors may be working with the same group of students. It is important in

these situations to make sure all the tutors who work with the group are familiar with what the students are being asked to do so that team working is reinforced and the students get the same message from all their tutors.

## Information And Ideas To Introduce About Teamworking

We don't all work the same way in teams and effective teams tend to be composed of people whose team role preferences are complementary. This is demonstrated both by experience and by research studies. Some of us are keen on getting the detail right, others want to introduce new ideas all the time; some are good at holding the team together, others at ensuring it completes its task. All are valuable roles and our different preferences need to be acknowledged and used to their best purpose. Meredith Belbin's study, based on close observation of a year long management game, suggests that there are 8 characteristic team roles. The well balanced team tends to be composed of people whose natural team role preferences fall within these 8, or who are prepared to compensate for the lack of some of these within the team. (A concise summary of Belbin's study can be found in Charles Handy's 'Understanding Organisations', Penguin, pp 160 - 161, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1993.) There are self assessment questionnaires which students can use to establish their team role preferences. Completion and discussion of these, once students have had some experience of team working, can be useful in further workshops to develop team working.

Having a leader or co-ordinator is vital in many team situations. This is a role which students need to agree amongst themselves and ensure that they all perform at some time. Defining the responsibilities of this role is an important part of exercise to draft the **team contracts**.

Different tasks demand different team processes. Generating a wide range of ideas requires a different team process from that needed for reaching agreement on a course of action. Regular progress meetings need different handling from meetings in which to evaluate what the team has learned from the project. It's important for students to recognise that different styles of working together are appropriate for different situations and to be able to practise these. This stops them 'falling out' and blaming each other when things get difficult.

Working on individual communication skills is vital for team work- saying clearly what you mean; checking that you've understood what colleagues intend, not talking all the time, being tolerant of other points of view. Students should be encouraged to think about their own performance in these areas and work on improving it with feedback from colleagues.

## Workshop Plans

There are three workshop plans included in this pack:

- Introducing team work
- Developing and selecting ideas in teams
- Running a review of the effectiveness of team working

**Additional notes** appear at the end of each workshop plan.

### Workshop Plan: Introducing Team Work.

Timing: 2 Hours

#### Aims

- To prepare students for team work on a forthcoming project.
- To alert students to the importance of team working both in education and at work.
- To enable students to recognise the value of having explicit agreed ways of working together, rather than leaving this to chance.
- To encourage students to review regularly how they work together so that their skills in team working develop.

#### Output

- Each team produces an agreed plan of action for the project (what will be done, when, how and by whom.)
- Each team agrees a simple team contract - a written set of rules outlining how they will work together.

#### Student Activities

- Warm -up: Say something to each other about previous experiences of working in teams.
- Experience working as a team through planning what needs to be done to complete the project.
- Review this experience of team work - what went well, what should have been done differently.
- Use this review to devise a simple team contract summarising how they will work together during the project, including a commitment to running brief reviews of their team working on a regular basis.

### Student Numbers

Around 25, allocated by the tutor to teams of 5 - 7.

### Staff Numbers

One will do, but it helps to have an 'assistant' to share the running of the session and circulate amongst the teams as they work.

### Equipment, Space etc.

- Room big enough to accommodate 25 students seated round large tables and allows them to pin up plans and circulate to compare these.
- Flip chart and overhead projector.
- A1 sheets of paper, marker pens and drawing pins/blu-tak for pinning up.

### Running Order And Script

Time	What the tutor does	What the students do	Notes
5 mins	<p>Outline aims of the workshop (planning the project and agreeing a team contract) and how the time will be divided between the tasks. Allocate students to teams, if this hasn't already been done (5 - 7 in each)</p> <p>Very briefly summarise the importance of team working, both for an architectural student and as a practising architect.</p> <p>(A sample page from an architect's working diary is included in the back-up material to make the point about team working.)</p>	<p>Join teams.</p> <p>Listen; ask questions.</p>	<p>Need to check students have understood all the aspects of the briefing. It's useful to invite one or two students to paraphrase what they have heard. (Paraphrasing to check understanding is a key skill to use in group work and it helps for the tutor to 'model' it for the students.)</p> <p>Important to show why spending time developing group working skills is relevant.</p>
10 mins	<p>As a warm-up, invite students to think about and then share their previous individual experience of effective team work. Explain this is a way of starting to think about the <u>how</u> of team work and that their output will be used later in the workshop.</p>	<p>Spend a couple of minutes thinking individually about experience of effective team working.</p> <p>Experiences shared with team in headline form through completing phrase 'Team work is.....'</p> <p>All comments noted down on A1 sheet by designated team scribe for later reference.</p>	<p>Important for motivation to get everyone to contribute early on. The device of getting students to make individual notes first makes sure everyone thinks. Contributing these to the group using a common format (the headline 'teamwork is...') and having them all written down confers equal value on contributions. Gets the team off to a good start.</p>

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15 mins*	Introduce the team project, with additional material as necessary. Use projector to summarise what the students are expected to produce during the project. Brief students to work together to produce the project plan. They have 30 mins for this and the plan should be written up on a large sheet.	Listen; ask questions.	Check understanding as above.  (*More time may be needed for complex projects)
30 mins	Circulate to ensure students have understood task and are working on it. Observe how the teams approach the task - but do not comment at this stage. Remind students how much time they have for the task. Encourage students to circulate and inspect other teams' plans. (The students' 'raw' team experience will be reviewed in the course of agreeing the 'team contracts').	Student teams sit round tables and work together to produce draft project plans. Each team needs to appoint a 'scribe'. Teams pin up plans as completed	Important to keep students to the task at this stage, reminding them how much time they have left and what the required output is.
5 mins	Brief students to start work on 'team contracts'.* Recommend that they do this in four stages (use projector to reinforce instructions) 1 Discuss the experience you have just had - in what ways did the team work well? What would you want to see done differently. 2 Look back at the list of effective team work experiences you made earlier. What can you do to ensure these are a feature of your team? 3 Anticipate some of the things that might go wrong in working on the project. What steps can you take to prevent these? 4 Use these to agree a list of ground rules that everyone in the team feels they can follow. Write these up on A1 sheet.  Advise that one person from each group will be asked to summarise to the large group. *(Suggestions for what to think about when producing a team contract form part of back-up notes. Tutors may want to give copies to the student.)	Listen; ask questions if necessary	Make it clear to students that they have achieved a <u>task</u> ; now they are to think about the <u>process</u> of working together effectively
30 mins	Circulate and help if necessary.	Students use briefing to produce team rules, drawing on the team contract suggestions if they wish. Agree who will report to the large group.	Important to keep the momentum going.

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15 mins	Invite spokesperson from each team to summarise briefly the team's 'rules' and the thinking that led to these. Invite comments from other teams but avoids contributing the bulk of the feedback him or herself.	Each team reports.	The value of this session is that it extends the pool of ideas and allows teams to refine their contracts if they wish. (It is also good practice in succinct presentation.) Essential that the tutor doesn't dominate - these have to be the students' ideas for them to experiment with them wholeheartedly.
5 mins	Explain the value of having a way of reflecting on how well the team is doing as a regular slot in their meetings. Invites students to decide how they will do this and asks them to make a note on their team contract.	Teams decide a simple way of reviewing their performance at the end of each meeting and write this on their contract. (Contracts are subsequently typed up and everyone gets a copy.)	Essential to get the students to commit themselves to following their 'rules'. The discipline of discussing 'how well did we do?' for a few minutes at the end of each meeting can help students develop as team workers.
5 mins	Ask students for written feedback on the workshop: 'One thing I have learned' and 'One question the workshop has raised in my mind.'	Students complete the written feedback on the workshop.	Two reasons for this feedback: Reinforces what the students have learned Demonstrates to the tutors how effective the workshop has been in achieving its aims

### Additional notes for introducing team work

a) Copy of page from an architect's work diary, showing numbers of team meetings.

b) Drafting a team contract - briefing for students:

- Discuss the experience of team working you have just had - in what ways did the team work well? What would you want to see done differently when the team works together again?
- Look back at the list of effective team work experiences you made earlier. What can you do to ensure these are a feature of your team?
- Anticipate some of the things that might go wrong in working on the project. What steps can you take to prevent these?
- Use these to agree a list of ground rules that everyone in the group feels they can follow.

c) Things to consider when developing a Team Contract

- Agreeing the responsibilities of the 'chair' of the team. For example:
- making sure there everyone agrees the aims of the project,

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- making sure the team carries out all the necessary tasks,
- arranging the meetings of the team,
- ensuring notes are kept.

Team members should take it in turns to act as chair, from project to project

### ***Responsibilities of other team members***

- Agreeing to carry out tasks as agreed.,
- Carrying them out on time
- Contributing ideas, information etc,
- Attending meetings - and being on time.

### ***Team behaviour***

What rules will the team members follow to help them work well together?

- Everyone gets a chance to speak in meetings. No interruptions or 'side meetings'.
- Listening to each other.
- Making decisions by consensus.
- Dealing openly with any problems.

### ***Learning from the team's experience***

Build in a few minutes at the end of each meeting to discuss what team members have learned, both from the project and from working together. It can be helpful to keep a simple record of this in a file for future reference.

## **Workshop Plan: Developing Ideas In Teams**

Timing: 1.5 hours

### **Aims**

- To develop awareness that teams work more effectively when they have a range of working methods to draw on and are able to select the method appropriate in a particular situation.
- To introduce a process for teams to use to develop rapidly a pool of ideas and then select the ones they want to take further.
- To use this process to develop ideas for a particular stage of a design project.

### **Output**

Each team produces a written list of possible ideas, to which everyone has contributed, to use for the given task and an agreement on which ones the group will take forward.

### **Student Activities**

- Students reflect on how they usually collect ideas when working in teams and the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. This is to prepare them to try out a different approach
- Briefly try out the ideas generating part of the process on a fictional problem. This is to give them practice before they start on the live problem.
- Review this experience
- Use the whole process to generate and select ideas to deal with a real problem in the design project.

### **Student Numbers**

Around 25, working in groups of 5 - 7.

### **Staff Numbers**

One - role includes introducing the process, modelling the recommended communication process, ('headline and background' - see back-up notes), briefing on the tasks, keeping the students focused and reviewing the process with them.

### **Equipment, Space, Etc**

- Room big enough to accommodate 25 students working round tables in teams of 5 - 7.

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- One flip chart per team if possible - teams need to be able to work on large sheets of paper which they can all see without upside down reading. (A1 sheets pinned up close to working tables will do).
- OHP/flip chart for tutor
- A1 sheets, marker pens, drawing pins for each team.

### Running Order And Script

Time	What the tutor does	What the students do	Notes
5 mins	Outline the session - aims, output, working methods. Explain that a process for generating ideas will be introduced. Students will use this to develop ideas for project task.	Listen; check understanding by asking questions.	Emphasise that the session is as much about developing a team skill as it is about getting the project task achieved. Check students follow by asking one or two of them to say what they understand as the aims.
5 mins	Outline project task - e.g.: to develop together questions to put to clients and users in a forthcoming meeting.	As above	Make sure the task you choose is appropriate for the use of this technique - i.e. is one where there are lots of ways of achieving it.
5 mins	Introduce first part of process, generation of ideas - a variant of brain storming. Explain why this approach helps. In brief: we tend to look for what is wrong in ideas thereby censoring many which could have potential. Letting ideas flow uncriticised results in a lot of ideas from which to select later. (Ask students how they feel when ideas are criticised.) Outline 'rules' (see additional notes) - Everybody contributes. - Switch off the censor -no criticism of your own ideas or anyone else's. - Go for quantity - Give ideas as 'headlines' - scribe records verbatim	Listen, ask questions if necessary  Respond to tutor's questions	Important to get students to think about the idea - suppressing the 'inner censor', becoming aware of their own self censoring devices and how they protect themselves when offering ideas in public: 'I haven't had time to think this through....' 'I'm not sure if this will work but...'  This enables them to see the value of letting go of the inner censor in order to develop a lot of ideas quickly. Point out that the whole process doesn't exclude analysis of ideas, it simply defers it until there are enough ideas to evaluate.

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10 mins	<p>Brief students to use rules on a quick warm-up exercise -for example, how to deal with 20000 unsold toothbrushes. They have 5 mins for this.</p> <p>Keep students to time; take one idea from each team; ask for any comments on what the exercise feels like and whether they followed the rules.</p>	<p>Teams appoint a scribe who can write fast and legibly. They have 5 minutes to generate as many ideas as they can for how to solve the problem. Scribe records ideas verbatim and numbers them.</p>	<p>Brainstorming should be done with speed, the scribe dashing ideas down and asking for more. Encourage the students to be playful - ideas often come from silly beginnings. A1 sheets should be visible to all members of the team - so they can see what's been said and use each others ideas as prompts. Make sure each idea is numbered - this helps later selection. Take one idea from each team - this acknowledges their effort and makes them laugh - a way of raising energy levels. Important to take some comments on what this technique feels like together with observations about whether the teams followed the 'rules' and whether they will do it differently when the get on to the real project</p>
2 mins	<p>Brief students on the real task. Remind them to use the rules and that purpose is to generate lots of ideas from which they will select later.</p>	<p>Listen; check anything they don't understand</p>	<p>Use 'headline and background' in briefing, i.e. make your points succinctly. This models the process for students.</p>
15 mins	<p>Circulate, makes sure teams are keeping to the rules. Otherwise don't intervene. Act as time keeper.</p>	<p>Student teams generate ideas for 15 mins. Scribes record them verbatim and number them.</p>	<p>Important to keep this energetic.</p>
10 mins	<p>Introduce idea selecting technique as follows. Each student is to choose his/her favoured ideas from the team's list. Each student has 5 ticks which can be allocated as the student chooses, for example they can all go on one idea, or be allocated as one tick each to five ideas. This quickly shows which ideas are most popular.</p>	<p>Listen, check they understand. Each team selects its top ideas, using the technique.</p>	<p>Use 'headline' and 'background' when briefing the students.</p>

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5 mins brief  20 mins work	Brief students to go through the chosen ideas in turn using the following approach: saying for each idea first, what they like about it and second, what concerns they have about whether it will work.(on projector) On the basis of this discussion, students refine the ideas to a point where the team has reached a consensus about their value, although some may need more work. Demonstrate this approach taking the 'top idea' from a sample team and asking team members to respond and develop it as outlined.	Students discuss and develop their ideas using the technique outlined. (Teams should appoint a chair to run this process as it requires some discipline from the group.)	Important that the teams stick to the recommended technique at this stage. It can be tempting to drop back into criticism and unprofitable debate. The process as outlined allows everyone to contribute and leads to the development of ideas that team members feel happy about adopting because they have contributed to their development.
8 mins	Review the session with the students. Ask first about the value of the ideas generated. Invite one idea and an account of how it was developed from each team. Then ask for comments from each team on the value of the process and what their experience has been in trying it out.	One student reports from each team, using headline and background format to keep the report concise.	Valuable to do this as it shares the pool of ideas beyond the initiating teams.
5 mins	Asks students for brief written comments on the value of the process used, suggestions for where the team will use it subsequently and any recommendations for rerunning the workshop. Issue students with brief summary of process they have tried out.* See additional notes	Students write feedback	Useful as a reinforcement for students of what they have learned. Also provides hints for subsequent reruns.

### Additional notes for developing ideas in teams

#### a) Idea generation rules

- Everybody contributes.
- Switch off the censor! No criticism - of your own ideas or anyone else's
- Be playful!
- Give ideas as 'headlines' (scribe notes headlines verbatim.)

#### b) stages in the process:

##### ***Getting the ideas together***

- People contribute as many ideas as possible. Don't discuss them!
- All ideas noted down big and legible, and numbered.

***Selecting the ideas to work on***

- Idea selection - everybody has 5 ticks to distribute amongst the list of ideas. No discussion.
- Top ideas are those with most ticks.

***Working up the ideas into a useful form***

- First, discuss what team likes about these ideas. Then outline any problems with them.
- Generate some more ideas for ways of getting round the problems.

## Workshop Plan: Reviewing Team Work

Timing; 45 minutes

### Objectives

- Students reflect on a recent team project in order to improve their understanding of team processes and develop their effectiveness as team workers.
- Students derive some lessons to take forward

### Output

- Personal action plans to work on during the next team work project.
- A set of notes to remind students what they said they would do differently. (Where the team will remain the same for the next project)

### Student Activities

- Reflect privately on the effectiveness of the team work
- Share this with other members of the team and the larger group in order to identify what they learned
- Decide any changes they need to make to their individual performance as team workers
- Agree any changes they need to make to how the team works together, if it is to continue.

### Student Numbers

Up to 30, working in teams of 5 - 7

### Staff Numbers

One - to run the session. It's a short session so it's important to keep things moving rather than allow rambling discussion. The role is **enabling** - helping the students think over the experience and then synthesise their individual thoughts as 'team learning'. It may be useful to other members of the tutoring team sit in on the session to hear the students' views.

### Equipment, Space Etc

- A room big enough for the students to do some work in their teams and also come together for a group discussion.
- Flip chart or chalk board.

## Running Order And Script

Time	What the tutor does	What the students do	Notes
3 mins	Outline aims of session: to reflect on what has been learned from the experience of team work in order to take that forward into subsequent teams. Focus is on learning from the process of team working rather than the task achieved.	Listen; check understanding.	The first time you and the students do this there are likely to be some misunderstandings. Make sure all the students are clear about the purpose of the session before they start.
7 mins: 2 brief, 5 notes	Brief students to make short individual notes about their experience of this recent team work in preparation for discussion with other team members: What did you do well as a team? What could you have done differently?	Listen  Make individual notes under the suggested headings.	This prompt to reflection is simple and allows many different things to emerge.  Asking them to write their own notes first is a way of encouraging everyone to participate.
15 mins	Ask students to share and discuss their individual experiences. Everyone must contribute to this. Remind the students that the useful feedback is specific feedback. If necessary, point out that the aim of this review is to learn, not allocate blame or settle scores.	Students work in teams to share and discuss their individual experiences of the team work.	Dependent on how well the team work has gone in the project, you may want to introduce an approach which prevents students blaming each other for perceived failures. Offering specific feedback on where you would like improvement "I found it difficult when you didn't get your work done in time" is easier to do something about than 'You messed up the whole project.'
10 mins	Ask the students to synthesise from this discussion 3 things the team learned from the experience and be prepared to report on these.	Students pick out three things they think the team has learned from its experience.	Asking for a limited number of things learned makes this an achievable task.
10 mins: 2 brief 8 discuss	Take one thing learned from each team and note on flip chart. If time allows, go round a second time. Lead students into a short discussion of how they will take these forward in subsequent team work. Suggest that students individually note what changes to their own team working behaviour they may want to make.	Reporters from each team summarise key team learning as requested.	May help to finish with a short homily on how working at being better at team work pays off in the long run. You may also want to alert them to the next piece of team work in the course.

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## CUDE workshop tutor support packs

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