



Should Students from Multiple Design Disciplines Create Products Together?

Dr. Ahmed Romouzy-Ali Senior Lecturer, Industrial Design Dept.

Dr. Ola Hamdy Associate professor, Ceramics Dept.

Dr. Waleed E. Hassen Associate professor, Metal Furniture and Constructions Dept. **Dr. Rasha Zenhom** Associate professor, Glass Dept.

Sandy Badr Ragheb Akladious Assistant Lecturer, Ceramics Department **Sammar Gomaa** Assistant Lecturer, Glass Department

Fatma Hendy Demonstrator, Industrial Design Department

Students Abdelrahman Mahdy; Ahmed El Shazly; Ahmed Salama; Alaa Mostafa Mohamed El-Shafie; Aly Ismail Ibrahim; Aya Gaber Abd El Azeem Hmad; Ayman El Gamal; Bilal Kareem; Doha Sameh; Elmoataz Beallah Abd Elkader; Eslam Abo Elzeen; Fayrouz Gabr; Hagar Ossama; Hatem Sameh; Mahmoud Elmoslemany; Mahmoud Mohamed Attallah; Mai Abou Elyazed; Mennat Allah Essam; Mohammed El-Sawah; Nahid Saad; Nehal Zaki; Raymonda Momtaz; Salsabeel Ahmed; Samaa Nada

Introduction

For the first time and as part of the Fourth International Conference of the Faculty of Applied Arts, the organising committee recommended piloting corresponding workshops to the conference themes of 'Creation - Designing - production - Competitiveness'. Accordingly, a design based cross-departments initiative was launched within the faculty under the title 'Design Studio'. The Design Studio is a new multi discipline approach to innovatively pilot how would students from different design discipline team up together and work collaboratively to solve a product problem or to design innovatively. With the aim to stimulate the students' creativity; confidence and to establish a teamwork spirit within a workshop format, a design brief was given to the student to come together with new concepts to design a mobile waiting unit for the people in the faculty. This was called the Design Studio – Product Design workshop, which involved four departments (Industrial Design; Glass; Ceramics; and Metal Furniture and Constructions).

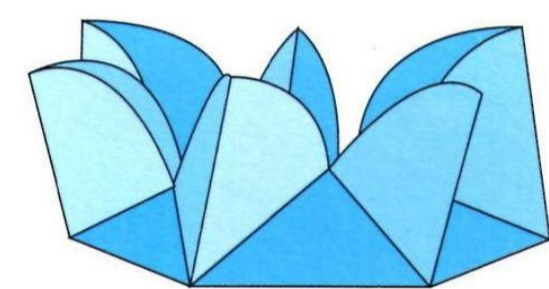
Methodology

The workshop has deployed a multidisciplinary approach to allow students from multiple design disciplines to work together to redefine a given design problem outside their normal boundaries of knowledge, experience and design practice. In addition, to allow the student to use a free and lateral way of thinking in order to generate creative and innovate concepts based on a new understanding of the actual design problem. Accordingly, the students were divided into five heterogeneous teams of five/six students each, where every team must have at least one student from all the participated departments. The workshop academic facilitators introduced the design problem to the students, clarified that they will only act as design consultants and that students should take responsibility to manage their design approach yet to consult academics but to make their own decisions.

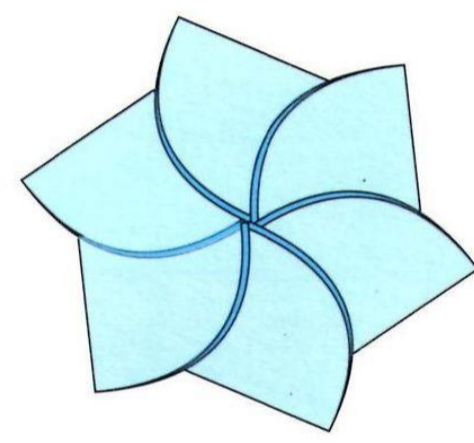
5 Teams Concepts



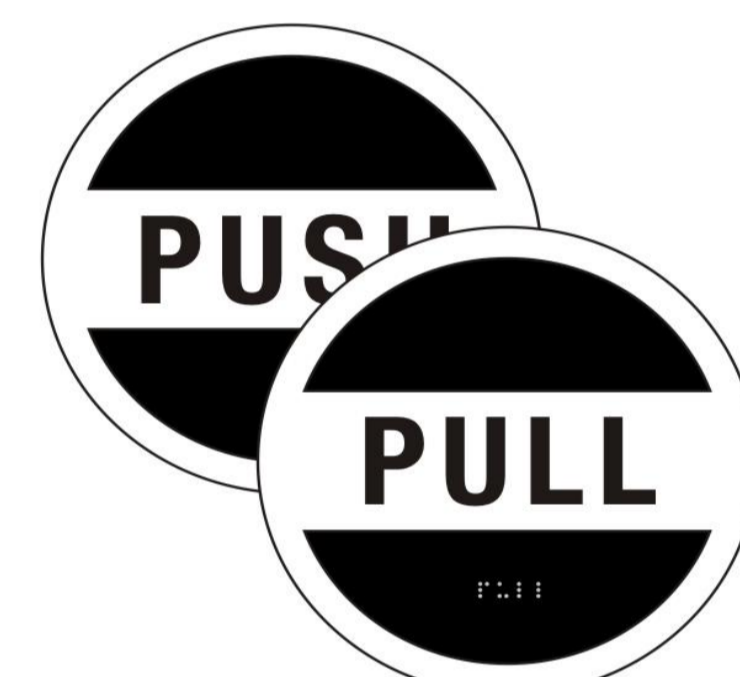
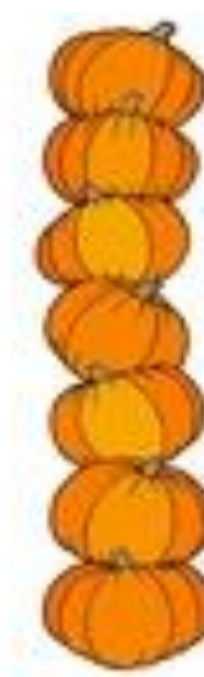
Inflatable



Foldable



Vertical



Hidden



Rubik's Cube

Adapted from (Edmondson, A.C., 2012)

Multiple functions must work together	People are geographically dispersed	Relationships are temporary	No two projects are alike	The work can be uncertain and chaotic
CHALLENGES Conflict can arise among people with differing values, norms, jargon, and expertise.	Time zone differences and electronic communication present logistical hurdles.	People may not have time to build trust and mutual understanding.	Individuals must get up to speed on brand-new topics quickly, again and again.	Fluid situations require constant communication and coordination.
BENEFITS ORGANIZATIONAL Innovation from combining skills and perspectives Ability to solve cross-disciplinary problems INDIVIDUAL Boundary-spanning skills Understanding of other disciplines Broader perspective on the business	ORGANIZATIONAL Greater alignment across divisions Better diffusion of the company's culture INDIVIDUAL Familiarity with people in different locations Deeper understanding of different cultures and of the organization's operations	ORGANIZATIONAL More shared experience among colleagues Greater camaraderie across the company INDIVIDUAL Interpersonal skills Extensive network of collaborators	ORGANIZATIONAL Ability to meet changing customer needs INDIVIDUAL Flexibility and agility Ability to import ideas from one context to another	ORGANIZATIONAL Ability to manage unexpected events INDIVIDUAL Project management skills Experimentation skills

Amy C. Edmondson (a Professor of Leadership and Management at Harvard Business School and the author of Teaming: How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy) stated in his article titled 'Teamwork on the fly' (Edmondson, A.C., 2012), that the most challenging attributes of teaming can also yield big organizational and individual benefits. Additionally, this diagram is adapted from Edmondson's article (Edmondson, A.C., 2012) to represent his finding on the rewards of teaming, which we have used as guidelines to evaluate this cross departments workshop initiative.

Conclusion

The workshop has proven to be the most successful practice for piloting the multi discipline and cross department approach in product design. Correspondingly, the aim of encouraging the teaming spirit in the students while exploring its limits and boundaries as well as its prospects, has been successfully accomplished. All the challenges and benefits explained by Edmondson in the above diagram were present, except geography due to been conducting the workshop for students from the same location. It has been decided now to thoroughly continue the evaluation process and publish the finding, in tandem with bidding for fund to conduct another workshop as the students have shown great interest in participating in a new cross department/multi discipline design workshop

Acknowledgement

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References

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