



INTRODUCTION

This is a guide for the production of an event as the subject for an educational course. The course can be tied to an institution, or not, but uses it as a model for organizing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is a topic driven, interdisciplinary research studio. Students will investigate the topic and their relationship to it in a variety of media, and supplement their inquiry with research that occurs outside the classroom. An exploration of different processes, materials, expression, and connection with the larger world will be emphasized. Our aim is to attend equally to the formal, contextual, and technical aspects of each subject we address. More specifically we will cover:
LANGUAGE // A continued exploration of an art vernacular, experimenting with ideation and articulation.
TECHNIQUE // Further exploration of methods and materials, experimenting with modes and tactics of producing art, widening a resource base for making. Greater emphasis on presentation strategies, providing alternative platforms for exhibiting work.
RESEARCH + RESOURCE // Creating a research archive to accompany a portfolio of projects, informing their intent and purpose.
COLLABORATION // Explore collaborative practices, placing emphasis on networking and resourceful management – DIT (Do-It-Together).
THEORY // Research relevant artists and artifacts, creating source materials/examples for critical approaches to dialogue about the topic.

TOPIC

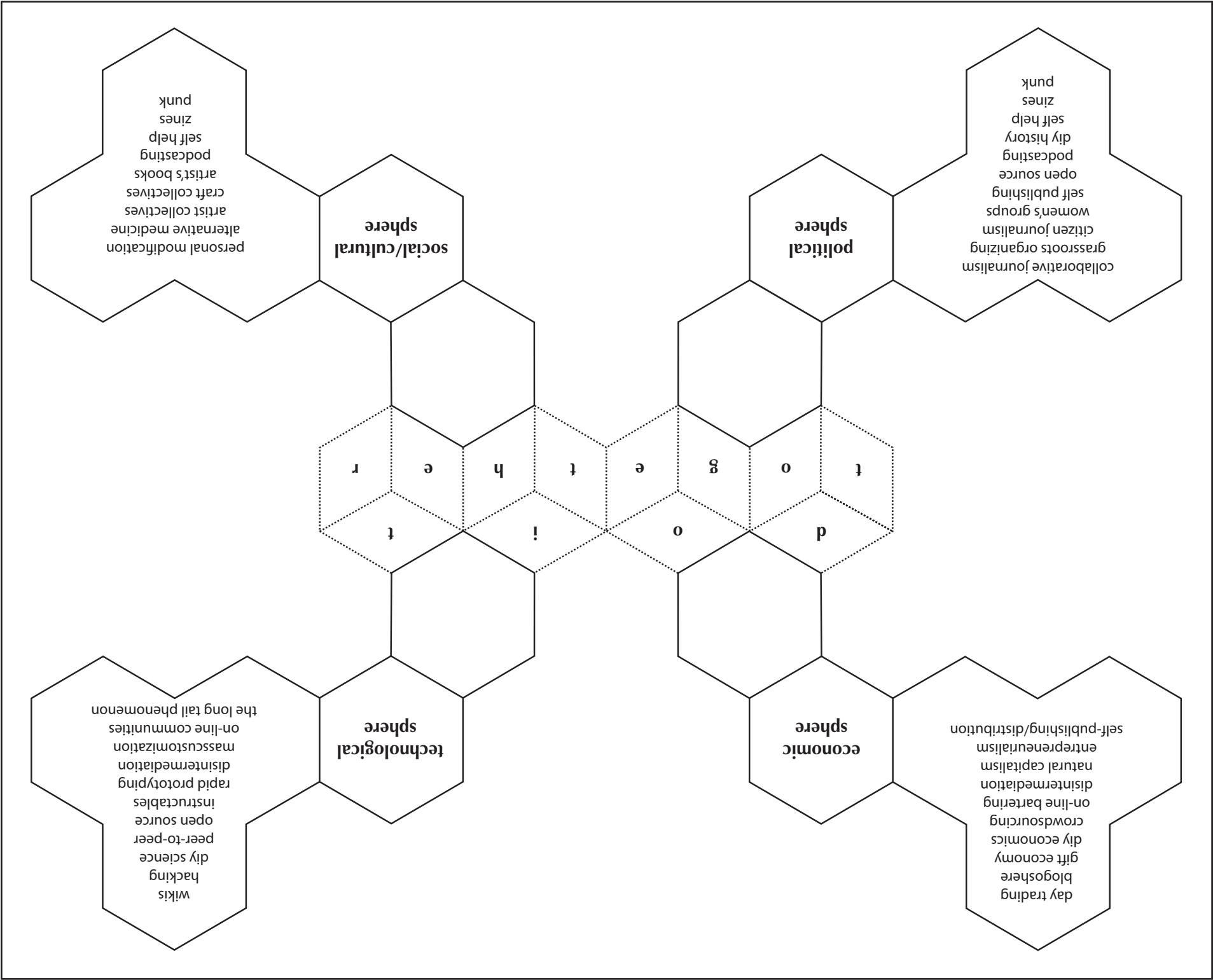
Open Media Studio will investigate the ways in which artists can and do adopt resourceful strategies and tactics to produce works in a pragmatic, inventive and critical manner. Presented with a DIY (DIT) Landscape* (see illustration #1) as a platform for a series of experimental projects, we will explore art as a mixture of traditional and non-traditional practices and methodologies stemming from multiple societal spheres.

Our platform will provide introductions to unique cultural producers, challenging art theory, and art that operates outside conventional art institutions. Our projects will examine the relationships between being an art student with institutional facilities and an independent artist pursuing an art practice-the carrying out or exercise of a profession*.

For more information please visit:
<http://openmediastudio.wordpress.com/>

*Pass It On! Connecting Contemporary Do-It-Yourself Culture at A+D Gallery of Columbia College, Chicago IL in Spring 2007 (<http://www2.colum.edu/adgallery/diy-home.html>)
*Oxford American Dictionaries

illustration #1



CONTEXT

This guide is part how to structure a class, and part how to help students produce events and activities. The guide is modeled after the course OPEN MEDIA STUDIO offered during the spring of 2008 at the University of Denver. Fifteen students ranging from second year to graduating BFA undergraduates participated in the class. The course accomplished many goals, some of which established a grounding in current dialogue and theory surrounding group work in art practice, experimentation in the exploration of self perception, especially as it pertains to the identity of students as artists, pinpointed assumptions about art students in regard to their larger community, and created work that combated those assumptions, redefining the students perceptions of community, engagement and participation.

The event the students produced was titled FREE ART. These are methods for how to produce this event.

Class Members: Francesca Aguirre-WongKristi, Ktisti Bryden-Trickel, Richard Burgess, Bailey Ferguson, Toby Gerard, Nikki Glazer, Marie Janiszewski, Misun Kim, Drew LaBarge, Jesse Lindenberg, Brigitte Nelson, Carl Novick, Jennifer Schneider, Callum Trigg-Smith



SURVEY

Create a short survey born out of group discussions about perception. Often we found ourselves making assumptions about how our community perceives us as artists/art students, resulting in false perceptions of our community. Our survey, in conjunction with a series of strategic interviews, helped us combat false perceptions/assumptions, and fostered new understandings of our community. Your survey should be short, simple and cover the range of your assumptions. We used a mixture of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and rating (a scale from 1-5) questions. They addressed value systems, especially with regard to time spent, or investments in certain fields of interest. We found that people believe an art degree is not as valuable as a business oriented degree, but we were surprised to find that our art building was very visible to people on campus and therefore quite recognizable as a place for art production.

We conducted our survey by foot, but also online with polldaddy.com. We collected over 300 surveys.

We decided to capitalize on the visibility of the art building and host our event in the front lawn. The group negotiated goals for the event and debated the potential meanings it could generate. These conversations gave birth to a set of intentions and ultimately a few ideas for an event title, which were later voted on. We determined a date and times that would foster participation and decided the event would benefit by pulling from another audience. Ours happened to be an outdoor music concert across the street from the art building.



WORKSHOPS

Prior to the workshops, determine the personal strengths and interests of each collaborator. If possible, make small concentrated groups that can communicate and capitalize on one another's strengths. Have the groups create proposals for what they want to present during the event. Editing and discussions must be scheduled and documented. Conduct a series of workshops preparing for the promotion and presentation of your art event. Schedule demonstrations on how to effectively brand and promote your event without depending on institutional resources. We had a Stenciling Demo, Dumpster Diving Demo, Embroidery Demo, Reusing Plastic Bags Demo, Button Making Demo, and a range of studio days devoted to making everything for our event with as little use of our university facilities as possible.

Rather than creating uniformity, let individuals create within loose parameters. Everybody should make a unique flyer, but with consistent information pertaining to the event (time, date, place, etc.). Create promotion that establishes an identity for the event, a language that reflects the intent and meaning of that which is being presented. The material produced should be gathered and organized into an advertisement campaign. In the days before the event, sport the items you've made in your workshops. If you made buttons, wear them. If you made flyers, post them. If you made a stencil for branding a t-shirt, wear it.



EVENT

The event will need to be organized, with clear communication between its members. Gain permission needed to use any space, electricity, equipment, or resources. Keep this to a minimum if possible. Send friendly reminders to as many networks as possible—mailing lists, social networking sites, word of mouth. Make certain members have the materials and support they need. Allow plenty of time for setup of the event. People should expect to be ready by the advertised time.

It is important to establish moments for praise. Recognize and honor members when they work hard. Affirmation can be a powerful tool in creating open and honest dialogue while promoting room for critique. Organizing an event and presenting one's work is a performance of sorts and can be very taxing.

Document your event with photo and video. It is important to have a record of the event for reference. Students can also use the documentation for their portfolios.

Photos:
FREE ART with special guests The Magnet Mafia
An Event That Combats the Perception of Art Students on Campus

Artchive CD Swap | Making Homeless Families | Foraged Foods | Guerilla Gardening
Everyone is an Artist | Skateboard Graphic Design | Stencil/Decorate Your Stuff

