

Approach

With the Bootcamp Curves outline I propose a set of stages, linking them together, create a pattern of curves that can potentially go on for as long as you need. Every smaller curve symbolizes the path towards sub objectives for each bootcamp day. The overarching curve, symbolizes the path towards the final objective. Aiming to establish maker mindset, the first two stages of each curve are fundamental, whereas the third and fourth stage relate to more commonly known operational steps of design thinking. The Bootcamp Curves approach is inspired by Kaospilot Business school pedagogy (<http://www.kaospilot.dk/kaospilot-educational-series/the-art-and-craft-of-designing-learning-spaces/>), and experience based learning methodology. It is grounded in three basic principles:

1. Level playing field. A bootcamp is built on what we call level playing field. Level playing field is both an actual physical environment and a mental space at the same time. Some of us feel they have not created anything physical for a long time. It might even feel like climbing a high mountain or jumping in a lion's den. To cross that bridge, we like to stress making is a creative process in which everybody has a role and is able to bring knowledge and expertise to the table. During a bootcamp we need a safe space for participants to embody their roles and be respected in each role.

On a physical level, the space needs to facilitate creation, movement and dialogue. Obviously we need stuff and tools to inspire us and be creative with. To shift from the mental to the "physical" mindset of making, the space needs to invite people to move around, take different postures, to sit, stand, walk around depending on the activity at hand. Finally a space needs to invite people to start dialogue on their work or progress.

2. Over prepare, understructure. Making is a creative process that has its own dynamics and each group handles a creative process differently. Some groups need more time during one part, others in another parts. Some participants need additional knowledge or skills, while others are more experienced and able to work independently. It is the facilitator's role to guide participants to make sure they reach their end goal, but be flexible in how to get there. I adopt Kaospilot saying a facilitator needs to over prepare, understructure.

3. Set that curve, and land it. Even if the process looks unstructured, it really is not. Each bootcamp, each single day, even within a specific activity we set a curve (a path towards our (sub)objective), and reach our goal (we land it). On the way we go through the same elementary stages: we set the stage, we get in the mood, we get inspired, we think through making, we land. We learn from our mistakes and moments of panic. We land and see perspective again. We go home, get rest and continue, realizing that we need to take one step back to set that next curve.

Bootcamp Curves program outline

Stage 1. Set the stage

In the beginning of each bootcamp we need to take time to create alignment, commitment and ownership. Participants need to be engaged and feel empowered to make the experience a (personal) success. We therefore need to address roles and expectations. Who are you as a facilitator and what is expected of participants.

It is the time where we introduce notions as, making as a universal language, safe spaces and level playing field. We stress making is a process in which everybody has a role and is able to bring knowledge and expertise to the table. Each participant is a person with needs, an expert in their field of work and an employee of an organization.

Stage 2. Get in the mood

To make, we need a maker mindset. A maker mindset is an attitude that gets us into that modus of doing what comes naturally. To first do, than think and reflect. To not be scared of failure, limited by group pressure or rational judgments. To be inspired by sharing things that are not finished, to open us up to alternative ideas or solutions you did not think of before. Starting any bootcamp, we like to tune in to the participants' maker mindset in terms of creativity and social dynamics from the very first moment.

Stage 3. Get inspired

Creative output does not exist on its own. No one is creative in a vacuum. Most creative processes have started even before you actually realized it. In our day-to-day lives we see things; we sense; we learn; we interact. It shapes who we are and forms a basis for the creation of new things from our personal perspective. Inspiration can come from many sources, from outside and within.

Stage 4. Thinking through making

This stage takes up the biggest part of a bootcamp programme. Participants form groups, they experiment, prototype, learn skills where needed, panic, rethink and share. This is not by definition a linear process though. Teams will go through many iterations, taking steps back and forth again. Thinking through making supports participants to make decisions quickly and enables you to better understand what will work and what won't.

Stage 5. Land that curve

Final stage of any bootcamp is to land that curve. As we like to start with a check-in, now we check-out. We conclude our work, take a step back and take time to absorb it all. Actually we like to take little landing moments throughout a bootcamp. We share our work. What did we do? How did we do it? What was the impact it had on us? How do we feel? What could be next? It will help us to take anything we do, to that next level.

This last stage is by far the most important part of any learning curve, though in bootcamps and workshops it is often left out. Please don't! It is key in making people see the value of learning by doing as if we were kids again