

# Design Workshop: Defining Environmental Prototypes



SAMS' students & lecturers at Lis Na Ree Resort

Just pause a moment: Have you heard about going to class on the beautiful sand beach of Cherating in Pahang?

Call it “Classroom Tourism” or any other names – it certainly is an innovative way of teaching a group of 40 architecture students for this one lecturer from University College Sedaya International, Koh Su Guan.

With a group of students from the School of Architecture, Management and Surveying (SAMS), Koh's recent Design Workshop on the charming Lis Na Ree Resort has just proven that for the “Jacks” and “Jills”, work and play can be a happy combination.

“Architects have to think out of the box,” said the 27-year-old Koh, who hails from Penang. “This is the reason why we have incorporated outings like this into our plan of teaching. Part of our curriculum is to teach students to develop design prototypes that would suit different elements of the earth – air, water and land.

“The school feels strongly about the concept of teamwork and learning from each other, as it parallels the ethos of the school’s academic programme.”

Lessons were drawn from the activities that they did together. Even from the simple dining together as a team for breakfast and dinner, participants was encouraged to draw inspirations from each other.



Students demonstrated great teamwork!

One of the participants, a foundation year student, Amirah Zakaria said the team building has helped her a lot in her overall development. “I get to know my seniors and lecturers, and this has helped us to bond together as a school,” she said.

Architects thrive on good inspirations. “And, inspirations come when one is in a most relaxed state of mind,” said Koh, borrowing a famous quote by Jenaiha Woods, who once said, “Design is the contrast of the core of limitations therefore there are no boundaries. It is simply an interpretation of creativity.”

The Design Workshop aimed to broaden the students’ knowledge on design and practical aspects in the built environment while simultaneously giving them an opportunity to have fun outside the classrooms.

Koh packed into his three-day programme a variety of tele-matches, which emphasised the team-building spirit amongst lecturers, seniors and junior students. “Never underestimate the value of such games in the overall development of our students,” he said.



A final check on the Floating Apparatus

At the end of it, a range of design projects was planned to challenge the students’ design capabilities, structural knowledge, and the integration of the two components.

The projects consisted of both individual and group projects to create prototypes within the premise of different environmental elements - wind, water, and land. They were Identified Flying Objects, Floating Apparatus, Sand Structures, and ‘Castaway’ Shelters.



Students having fun!

Turning 18 this year, Matthew Chang said he was happy to win one prize in one of the competitions. “It was challenging at the best in helping me develop my designing skills, when we built the sand castles,” he said.

The trip included excursions and site visits to neighbouring attractions such as the award winning Impiana Resort, the Cultural Centre, and the Turtle Sanctuary.

On the final evening, SAMS celebrated the success of the Design Workshop with an award ceremony and a barbeque, lit by the lanterns designed by the students.

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