



Knowledge to lead

Design Thinking

Step by step

1. UNDERSTAND

Understanding is the first phase of the design thinking process. During this phase, students immerse themselves in learning. They talk to experts and conduct research. The goal is to develop background knowledge through these experiences. They use their developing understandings as a springboard as they begin to address design challenges.

2. OBSERVE

Students become keen people watchers in the observation phase of the design thinking process. They watch how people behave and interact and they observe physical spaces and places. They talk to people about what they are doing, ask questions and reflect on what they see. The understanding and observation phases of design thinking help students develop a sense of empathy.

3. DEFINE

In this phase of design thinking, the focus is on becoming aware of peoples' needs and developing insights. The phrase "How might we..." is often used to define a point of view, which is a statement of the: user + need + insight. This statement ends with a suggestion about how to make changes that will have an impact on peoples' experiences.

4. IDEATE

Ideating is a critical component of design thinking. Students are challenged to brainstorm a myriad of ideas and to suspend judgment. No idea is too far-fetched and no one's ideas are rejected. Ideating is all about creativity and fun. In the ideation phase, quantity is encouraged. Students may be asked to generate a hundred ideas in a single session. They become silly, savvy, risk takers, wishful thinkers and dreamers of the impossible...and the possible.

5. PROTOTYPE

Prototyping is a rough and rapid portion of the design process. A prototype can be a sketch, model, or a cardboard box. It is a way to convey an idea quickly. Students learn that it is better to fail early and often as they create prototypes.

6. TEST

Testing is part of an iterative process that provides students with feedback. The purpose of testing is to learn what works and what doesn't, and then iterate. This means going back to your prototype and modifying it based on feedback. Testing ensures that students learn what works and what doesn't work for their users.



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