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## Design Thinking Toolkit

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# Design Thinking Toolkit

“Design an experience that supports your mission or major”



Jonathan Cook  
Jaclyn Ermoyan  
Honors Senior Project  
2016

# Leading a Design Thinking Immersion

Dear reader,

Students often get lost in the day-to-day grind of going to classes, completing assignments and studying for their next exam. This activity asks students to take a deep breath to reflect on *why*.

In this immersion, students generate a list of experiences that contribute to a mission in their life, rather than being limited by a major. To do this, students apply Design Thinking methodology to challenge their thinking and develop radical solutions that will become pathways towards their desired future.

Benefits of this activity

- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Problem-solving framework for real-world situations
- Valued by employers

This activity was tested with over 200 freshman students to determine what works best in creating an activity that best encourages students to empathize, share, and practice Design Thinking, as well as derive new ideas.

This packet has been through multiple iterations and contains the information you need to successfully conduct a Design Thinking Immersion. Within this packet, you will find a workbook for the students, and the Moderator's Instruction Guide and Presentation.

The materials used to create this toolkit can be found at <https://goo.gl/oqbSyn>. We encourage you to continue modifying it in whatever way you feel works best for you.

Jonathan Cook

Jaclyn Ermoyan

## **Table of Contents:**

- Workbook
- Moderator's Instruction Guide
- Moderator's Presentation

## **Required materials:**

- Computer
- Projector
- 1 Workbook per participant
- Moderator's Guide
- Moderator's Presentation
- Pencils

## **Notes to keep in mind:**

- Walk around and listen to questions
- Help guide the conversation as needed
- Emphasize key areas such as empathy, perspective, etc.
- Give recommendations to groups that are struggling to dive deeper

# Workbook



# YOUR DESIGN CHALLENGE:

## Design an experience that supports your partner's mission/major.

1

### Building Empathy

Think about your partner's needs, wants and motivations.

Discover something about your partner that maybe s/he doesn't see.

Your goal is to hear at least one good, insightful story from your partner.

1

### Create an interview guide

**Be human; be friendly.**

“What's your name?”

“How are you today?”

“What do you study?”

**Seek stories; use open ended questions.**

“Could you tell me...

... what you tell your best friends about what you want to study?”

... the one thing you are most nervous about?”

... questions you still have about the college experience?”

“What do you think ...

... you can do better than anyone else?”

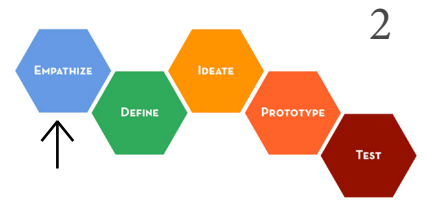
... hinders you from achievement?”

... you want to accomplish at Grand Valley? In your career?”

... your mission and major means?

5 minutes





## 2 Interview your partner

(just have a conversation—but make sure to take lots of notes!)

2 Sessions x 4 Minutes Each

Notes from Interview #1:

A large, empty gray rectangular area intended for taking notes from the first interview.

2 Sessions x 3 Minutes Each

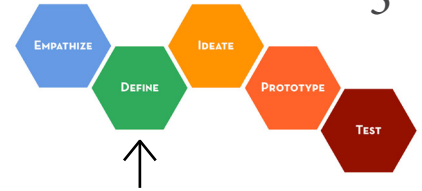
Interview #2: Dig deeper by asking about feelings.

“Why do you say that?”

“Tell me more.”

“How did you feel at that moment, when X happened?”

A large, empty gray rectangular area intended for taking notes from the second interview.



# 3 Define the Opportunity

## Insights to innovations

5 minutes

**Connect the dots; focus on insights.**

- Do you see any trends or patterns in your partner's stories?
- What are they most excited to talk about and why?
- Are you noticing any similarities between their mission and major? Differences?

Your goal is to make an inspired, passionate statement.

**Something that seems to be important to my partner is...**

[ex. "Jaclyn seems to enjoy being an active contributor to her community"]

---

Why? ↳

---

Why? ↳

---

**A challenge my partner faces is...**

[ex. "Jaclyn is exhausted because of her 19 credits and two jobs this semester"]

---

Why? ↳

---

Why? ↳

---

4 minutes

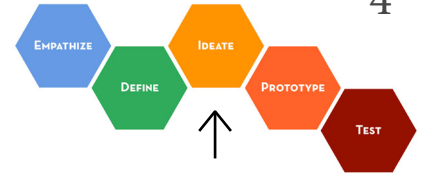
\_\_\_\_\_ needs to \_\_\_\_\_  
 [your partner's name] [something that seems important to your partner]

despite \_\_\_\_\_  
 [a challenge or obstacle that your partner is facing]

[ex. "I wonder if Jaclyn needs a way to be comfortable with failure despite having two jobs and a full class load."]

Check with your partner to see if this statement hits the mark. Why or why not? Write your revised statement on the next page.





# 4

## Ideate

Brainstorm ideas to meet your partner's needs. The more radical, the better.



Write your revised problem statement above (ex. "Jaclyn needs a way to have a positive impact on her community despite having two jobs and a full class load.")

Start here with a sketch and caption

How can you and your partner take your initial ideas to the next level?  
Take notes below



Next level ideas go here



5 minutes

4 minutes

5 minutes

# Switch workbooks with your partner

## What's next?

We hope you had fun today.  
Here are some ways to move forward with your work.

## Continue the process

Step 1 / Finish.

Make time to go through the remaining steps. (5-7)

Step 2 / Get Connected

Find more opportunities to build upon your ideas from today.

Work together to discover all of the opportunities provided to you.

Check out these resources:

[www.gvsu.edu/counsel/resources-on-campus-81.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/resources-on-campus-81.htm)

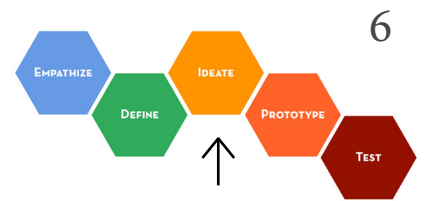
[www.gvsu.edu/socialmedia/directory.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/socialmedia/directory.htm)

[www.gvsu.edu/careers/](http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/)

[www.ahoylaker.com](http://www.ahoylaker.com)

[www.designingyour.life](http://www.designingyour.life)

[www.creativeconfidence.com](http://www.creativeconfidence.com)



## Develop the picture

Keep your creative hat on! Pick an idea and work out the details.  
Your goal is to develop the idea and make it real.

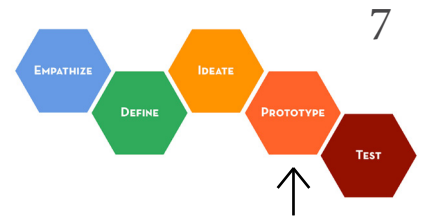
5

## Choose one idea and sketch it out into an experience, product or service

(what action steps are necessary? how does it work? why this solution?)

3 minutes

# Prototype



Your goal is to develop and test your solution by making it tangible.

6

## Bring your solution to life

(use your imagination to create a world where your solution already exists)

PART 1 / Build: Make props that set the scene/world

PART 2 / Demo: Demonstrate how your partner would engage with the solution. If it helps, create a script or storyboard.

7 minutes

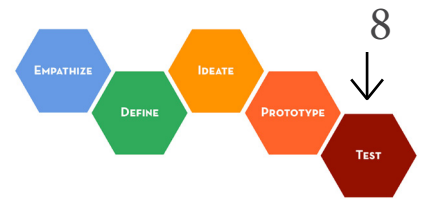
Consider these aspects of the imaginary world you're creating:

*Scene—The context of experience*

*Roles—People involved in experience*

*Senses—See, hear, taste, smell and touch*

*Props—Simple tangible things in experience*



7

# Test with your partner

(share with your advisor, RA, roommates, friends, etc. to hear their feedback)

2 sessions x 4 Minutes Each

What worked?  +	What could be improved?  -
?  New questions	!  New ideas

# **Moderator's Instruction Guide**

# Moderator's Guide

## Slide 1

5 minutes

*(Introduce and tell the audience about yourself. Talk about your previous experiences to give yourself credibility.)*

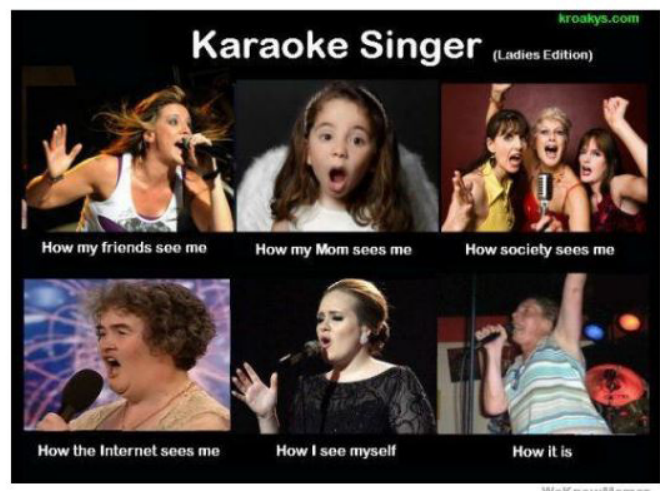
- By a show of hands, who has heard about DT?



## Slide 2

1 minute

- Today we are going to be taking a look at the importance of perspectives.
- I'm sure many of you have seen a meme like this, that shows many different perspectives of a college science student.
- With this study of different perspectives, we will be practicing using empathy.
- Empathy is different than sympathy because it is really focusses on putting yourself in someone else's shoes to truly understand what they are thinking or feeling and why.
- Empathy is a necessity when solving problems, as without an understanding of how solutions might impact others, it probably isn't really a solution that will work.



## Slide 3

3 minutes

- Today we're going to be using Design Thinking methods to work on creating or determining a personal mission instead of a major.
- Many students are undecided when they enter college, or change their mind after they start.
- We are going to be taking the things you might not be questioning, or don't have the time to, and putting a fresh spin on it. Maybe you have a major and know exactly what you want to do when you graduate, but you don't know how to balance other things you want to accomplish; or maybe you don't have a major but you have set experiences that you know you have enjoyed.
- Everyone has a different goal that they want to get out of college. In this activity we will be using Design Thinking methods to help someone else in this class refine their path, so empathy will be crucial as we are refining our partner's path, not your own.
- Take a minute and find a partner. Feel free to move around and I'll tell you now that there can't be groups of three!



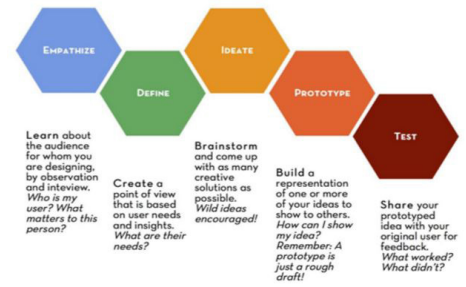
## Slide 4

2 minutes

- When we talk about Design Thinking as a thought process, this is the framework that is commonly used to describe it.
- Each step of the activity that we will be doing today relates to each step of this Design Thinking outline.
- We will be empathizing with our partner on the strengths and challenges to their plan, defining a problem statement and ideating what a possible solution is. Unfortunately we will not be developing a prototype or testing during this hour, but we provide you with the materials you need to continue after class.







## Page 1 of packet

:30 Seconds  
(Still slide 4)

- Before we start with building empathy, we are going to take a few minutes to create an interview guide.
- You will be using this guide to help you learn more about your partner.
- Maybe you know your partner, maybe you are just meeting.
- Start with basic questions like their name and if they have a major or not, and then anticipate some responses.
- Maybe you want to ask what their hobbies and interests are, what are their career goals, what are they nervous about or some challenges they face in reaching those goals.
- How can you encourage your partner to tell their story?
- Take the next **5 minutes** to write down some questions.

*(Students spend 5 minutes completing interview guide. Let them know when time is half way done and when they have 30 seconds left to finish writing down any last questions they have for their partner)*



**YOUR DESIGN CHALLENGE:**  
Design an experience that supports your partner's mission/major.

### Building Empathy

Think about your partner's needs, wants and motivations.  
Discover something about your partner that maybe s/he doesn't see.  
Your goal is to hear at least one good, insightful story from your partner.

#### 1 Create an interview guide

**Be human; be friendly.**

- "What's your name?"
- "How are you today?"
- "What do you study?"

**Seek stories; use open ended questions.**

- "Could you tell me...
  - ... what you tell your best friends about what you want to study?"
  - ... the one thing you are most nervous about?"
  - ... questions you still have about the college experience?"
- "What do you think ...
  - ... you can do better than anyone else?"
  - ... hinders you from achievement?"
  - ... you want to accomplish at Grand Valley? In your career?"
  - ... your mission and major means?

5 minutes





## Page 2 of packet

:30 seconds  
(Slide 5)

- Great, now that we have a list of questions, we are going to move to the second page of the packet and actually interview our partner.
- Ask open-ended questions. Get personal. Learn, discover and continue to learn about your partner's experiences, because you are creating a mission for them, not for yourself. What makes a good mission for you might not equate to a good one for your partner. This interview is our first step to empathize with your partner to find out what they care about.
- You are going to have 4 minutes each to interview each other. Partner A will spend 4 minutes interviewing partner B, and then we will switch, and partner B will have 4 minutes interviewing partner A.
- Be sure to use the space provided to write down notes and details about your partner. These will be helpful to refer back to when moving forward.
- Think about this interview as a conversation, but always refer back to the interview guide that you created if you get stuck.
- The **first 4 minutes** starts now.

*(Let students know when they have two minutes left, and again when they have 30 seconds left.)*

- Time is up! The person who was the interviewer is now being interviewed, the person who was being interviewed is now being the interviewer.
- Remember to take notes and listen to details about your partner.
- The **second 4 minutes** starts now

*(Let students know when they have two minutes left, and again when they have 30 seconds left.)*

**2 Interview your partner**  
(Just have a conversation—but make sure to take lots of notes!)

2 Sessions x 4 Minutes Each

Notes from Interview #1:

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2 Sessions x 3 Minutes Each

**Interview #2:** Dig deeper by asking about feelings.  
 "Why do you say that?"  
 "Tell me more."  
 "How did you feel at that moment, when X happened?"

GVSU Design Thinking - Jaclyn Erntoyan & Jonathan Cook



## Second half of page 2 of packet

:30 seconds  
(Slide 5)

- Now we will be diving deeper into these interviews and really get to know our partners.
- We are going to go through another two rounds of interviews, but this time focussing on specific feelings and emotions.
- What challenges hinder them from reaching their goal?
- Ask for specific stories
- Think of a 2 year old asking questions. You give them an answer but then they keep asking WHY. We want you to be just like that.
- Ask why they feel that way, or why they do something even though it has a predictable outcome.
- Same setup as last time, each person will be interviewed individually, we will tell you when to switch and then it will be the next person's turn.
- Remember to dive deep, ask why, look for trends or patterns, ask about specific stories.
- This time, each partner has **3 minutes**.

*(Let students know when they have two minutes left, and again when they have 30 seconds left.)*

- By a show of hands, how many of you learned something new or interesting about their partner, by asking “why”?
- That's awesome! Now, with your hand still up, turn and give your partner a high-five and say “it was nice to meet you!”

**2**

**Interview your partner**

(just have a conversation—but make sure to take lots of notes!)

2 Sessions x 4 Minutes Each

Notes from Interview #1:

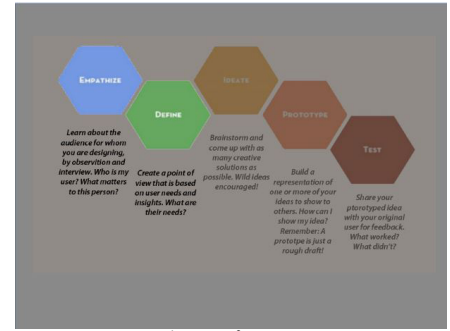
Interview #2: Dig deeper by asking about feelings.

“Why do you say that?”

“Tell me more.”

“How did you feel at that moment, when X happened?”

2 Sessions x 3 Minutes Each



## Page 3

## 1 minute (Slide 6)

- The findings from the two interviews should have shed some light on what matters in life to your partner. This is where we begin to transition our empathetic understanding of our partner's mission to begin defining potential areas for innovation or mapping options they can take.
- We are now going to take a stand by stating the meaningful challenge you are going to take on for your partner
- This is the statement you are going to address with your design, so it should be obtainable and actionable; a problem worth solving
- Take **2 minutes** to write down one thing that seems important to your partner and one challenge that they face.
- After you have the first lines filled out, have **3 minute** a conversation with your partner and ask them “why” to each of the statements you wrote down. Try to really get two “whys” deep.
- Talking with your partner is okay! Collaborating isn't cheating.
- Now, take the next **2 minutes** to write a needs statement for your partner, in the box below the “why” lines

Here are some examples

- I wonder if my partner needs a way to have a career that makes people fulfilled and happy despite not having time to volunteer.
- I wonder if my partner needs a way to balance studying abroad despite needing to graduate in four years.
- Take **2 minutes** Get their feedback to make sure that they agree with this statement
- When you and your partner are finished sharing, give each other a high five.

*(While participants are sharing, walk around the room and ask some if they would be comfortable sharing when you ask for volunteers. Plant 3-4 volunteers.)*

- Thank you for volunteering, those were really valuable insights. It's interesting how many different statements can be created.

**3 Define the Opportunity**

**Insights to innovations** 5 minutes  
 Connect the dots; focus on insights.  
 Do you see any trends or patterns in your partner's stories?  
 What are they most excited to talk about and why?  
 Are you noticing any similarities between their mission and major differences?

Your goal is to make an inspired, passionate statement.  
**Something that seems to be important to my partner is...**  
 [ex. "Jaclyn seems to enjoy being an active contributor to her community"]

Why? ↳ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why? ↳ \_\_\_\_\_

**A challenge my partner faces is...**  
 [ex. "Jaclyn is exhausted because of her 19 credits and two jobs this semester"]

Why? ↳ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why? ↳ \_\_\_\_\_

**4 minutes**

[your partner's name] needs to [something that seems important to your partner]  
 despite [a challenge or obstacle that your partner is facing]

[ex. "I wonder if Jaclyn needs a way to be comfortable with failure despite having two jobs and a full class load"]

Check with your partner to see if this statement hits the mark. Why or why not? Write your revised statement on the next page.

**4 Ideate**  
Brainstorm ideas to meet your partner's needs. The more radical, the better.

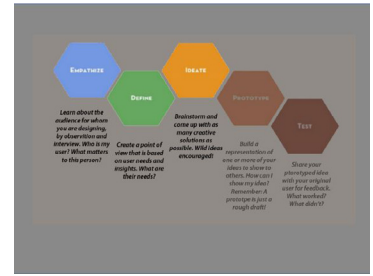
Write your revised problem statement above (ex. "Jaclyn needs a way to have a positive impact on her community despite having two jobs and a full class load.") 5 minutes

Start here with a sketch and caption	How can you and your partner take your initial ideas to the next level	Next level ideas go here
	+	=
	+	=
	+	=

## Page 4 preview

2 minute  
(Slide 7)

- The next step that we will be practicing is ideate.
- During this step, we will be sketching possible solutions to meet your partner's needs.
- We understand that a blank canvas can be intimidating, so here's an example.
- The needs statement for these ideas was "My partner needs a way to accept failure to become more motivated for future challenges."
- As you can see, the leftmost column is the initial trio of ideas to address the need statement.
- The middle column is additional feedback from the partner to make the proposals even better.
- The third column synthesizes all of the information into a more refined idea that better addresses the needs of their partner.
- The idea in the first row began as a hobby to help the partner start something that would foster progress in spite of failed attempts at new painting techniques.
- The feedback from the partner was a stronger preference in culinary arts, rather than painting.
- So, the third column depicts new baking techniques and recipes that will be delicious treats, while overcoming failed batches along the way to success.



5 minutes  
(Slide 8)

## Page 4

- Take **1 minute** to rewrite your needs statement from the previous page to the top of this one.
- Don't be nervous about sketching! Really, stick figures are highly, highly, encouraged.
- Be as creative and imaginative as possible. The more radical these ideas are, the better.
- This is time for idea generation not evaluation.
- You will have **5 minutes** to get at least 3 sketches. The left 3 boxes are for captions and sketches.

*(Walk around the room and really encourage participants to get at least 3. Let participants know when the halfway point hits, and when they have 30 seconds left)*

## Middle of page 4

- The middle column is another opportunity to learn about your partner. Show and tell your partner about the ideas that you generated in the first column to see what sticks and what doesn't.
- Take turns and take notes to guide your ideas for the third column.
- Be constructive in your feedback. Comment on clever fixes, and also clearly explain what you're looking for in a solution.
- Let your partner fumble, misinterpret and ask questions. The feedback shouldn't be taken personally, especially since you had minimal time to generate your solutions.
- Rather than just telling them which ideas you like or not, talk about specific aspects of each one that you like and think are relevant.
- Each partner will have **4 minutes** to share their ideas. Be sure to take notes on what your partner thinks about the ideas that you created for them!

*(Let participants know when they have two minutes left, and again when they have 30 seconds left. Switch. Let participants know when they have two minutes left, and again when they have 30 seconds left.)*

## Right of page 4

- Next, individually again, spend the next **5 minutes** taking your partner's advice again and build upon your ideas. Make them more actionable in this step.

**4 Ideate**  
Brainstorm ideas to meet your partner's needs. The more radical, the better.

Write your revised problem statement above (ex. "Judyn needs a way to have a positive impact on her community despite having two jobs and a full class load.")

Start here with a sketch and caption	+	=	Next level ideas go here

5 minutes      4 minutes      5 minutes



## Slide 9

5 minutes

- This is actually where we are going to stop today in the process, but if you look ahead in your packet, you'll see the rest of the steps outlined and how you could apply them to this activity.
- Does anyone want to share the ideas that their partner came up with? Be sure to share the needs statement in addition to the idea.
- How was this experience for you?
- What was the most challenging part?
- What was it like to start the process of problem-solving with empathy work?
- What might you do next?

## Conclusion

5 minutes

Slides 12-14

*(Always thank them for participating and give participants a way to follow-up with you, i.e. contact information. We encourage a survey to be used at the end of each activity so the presenter can always be learning and adapting.)*

goo.gl/KAPrWp



### What's Next?

- Join the Design Thinking Club
- Design Thinking Class (HNR 313-01)
- Apply Design Thinking to any problem
- Stay in touch!

### THANK YOU

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Insta: @jaclynermoyan  
Twitter: @jaclynermoyan

# PowerPoint



# Design Thinking Immersion

“Design an experience that supports  
your mission or major”



# Karaoke Singer (Ladies Edition)



How my friends see me



How my Mom sees me



How society sees me



How the Internet sees me

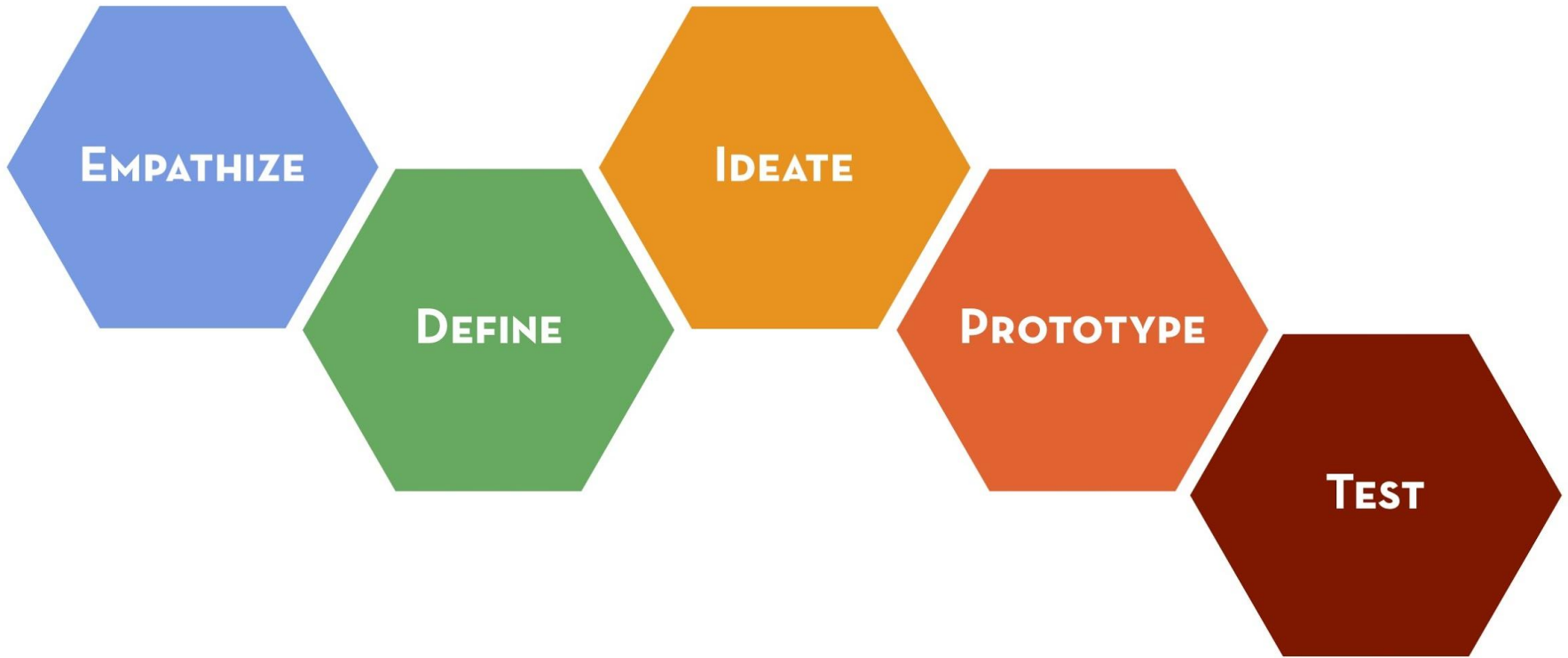


How I see myself



How it is





**EMPATHIZE**

*Learn about the audience for whom you are designing, by observation and interview. Who is my user? What matters to this person?*

**DEFINE**

*Create a point of view that is based on user needs and insights. What are their needs?*

**IDEATE**

*Brainstorm and come up with as many creative solutions as possible. Wild ideas encouraged!*

**PROTOTYPE**

*Build a representation of one or more of your ideas to show to others. How can I show my idea? Remember: A prototype is just a rough draft!*

**TEST**

*Share your prototyped idea with your original user for feedback. What worked? What didn't?*

**EMPATHIZE**

*Learn about the audience for whom you are designing, by observation and interview. Who is my user? What matters to this person?*

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*Learn about the audience for whom you are designing, by observation and interview. Who is my user? What matters to this person?*

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# 4

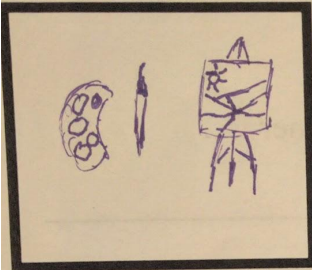
## Ideate

Brainstorm ideas to meet your partner's needs. The more radical, the better.

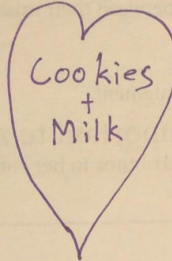


Write your revised problem statement above (ex. "Jaclyn needs a way to have a positive impact on her community despite having two jobs and a full class load.")  
5 minutes

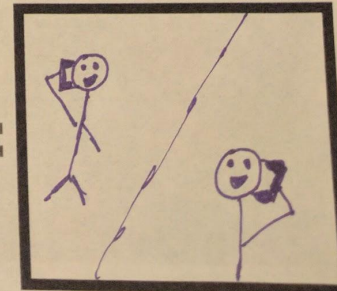
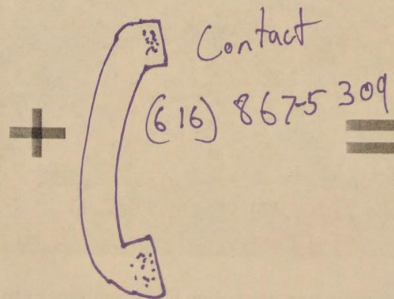
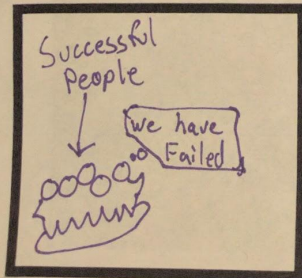
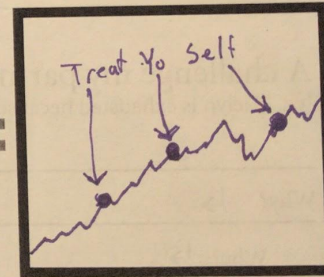
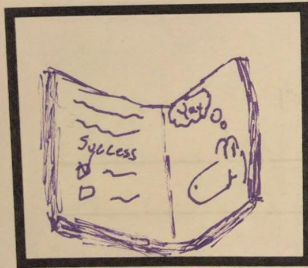
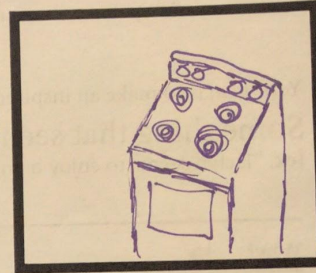
Start here with a sketch and caption



How can you and your partner take your initial ideas to the next level



Next level ideas go here







Let's  
**Discuss...**

**EMPATHIZE**

*Learn about the audience for whom you are designing, by observation and interview. Who is my user? What matters to this person?*

**DEFINE**

*Create a point of view that is based on user needs and insights. What are their needs?*

**IDEATE**

*Brainstorm and come up with as many creative solutions as possible. Wild ideas encouraged!*

**PROTOTYPE**

*Build a representation of one or more of your ideas to show to others. How can I show my idea? Remember: A prototype is just a rough draft!*

**TEST**

*Share your prototyped idea with your original user for feedback. What worked? What didn't?*

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[goo.gl/TqrMh7](https://goo.gl/TqrMh7)



# What's Next?

- Join the Design Thinking Club
- Design Thinking Class (HNR 313-01)
- Apply Design Thinking to any problem
- Stay in touch!

# THANK YOU

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