DEEPENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH DESIGN

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Design Impact is a social innovation nonprofit that designs inclusive and creative approaches to complicated social problems. We use design to create social change.

**WE BELIEVE...**

**CURIOSITY**
inspires us to deeply understand the people and places around us.

**COMMUNITY**
changes outcomes by including those most affected.

**CREATIVITY**
unlocks new possibilities within all of us.

**COURAGE**
drives us to act even when the path isn’t clear.

Design thinking is a powerful tool. The practice of design thinking empowers us to take something that is, look at it in a new way, and make it how it ought to be.

**THE PROCESS**

- start with relationships
- build empathy
- make sense of what you learn
- community voice
- spark ideas, together
- try some of them out!
A frame is a perspective or point of view on a topic or issue. We frame everything we see based on our experience and knowledge. These frames help us make sense of the world around us, and support our ability to survive. However, our frames can act as lenses that distort reality. They can make us blind to certain details and make us less objective in the way we perceive the world.

The ability to reframe a problem, or to see it from a different perspective from our own, is a powerful way to see new connections and possibilities. In using a new frame we shift our perspective, see in a new way, and often discover new meaning.

In design thinking we'll often reframe our problem or issue as an opportunity for change. A great way to do this is by writing a ‘How might we...?’ (HMW) question. A good HMW question is both inspiring and actionable. It should drive curiosity and not have an embedded solution in its language.

Example:

Let’s say you are working on getting parents to engage in their children’s education.

This could be re-written as:

“How might we create experiences that integrate children and parents in the classroom?”

Individually write down your HMW below:

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If I had an hour to solve a problem I’d spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.”

Albert Einstein
**BEGINNERS’ MIND**

This is the most important part of observation. Not being critical and having an open mind are essential to seeing new solutions and understanding issues. When you are interviewing and observing it is important to keep an unbiased mind. Some people think of this as seeing like a child—without prejudice or assumptions to why things are.

**STEPS**

1. **Go where the stakeholder is:** The best way to observe people is in their natural environment. Find out where people live, work, and play and go there!

2. **Observe:** You want to look for shifts in behavior, homemade or workaround solutions to problems, body language, wasted time, repeated patterns or breaks in them, and anything that surprises or inspires you. Make an effort to blend into the background.

3. **Find the extreme:** It will help you to find extreme users, outliers, and experts. These people will have a more intimate engagement with the environment you are considering and often their habits are more fruitful when looking for inspiration or innovation.

4. **Record and discuss:** When you observe, take notes and when you are done observing, discuss those notes with another member of your team, immediately. Take it a step further and graph or chart out your observations. Have different observers watch the same event and share notes.

**EMPATHIC INTERVIEWING**

Interviewing for empathy focuses on getting the subject to deeply engage with the topic, thus revealing the motivation, meaning and values behind their actions. Getting to this deeper level is essential, because it is where we build understanding and gain insights that can inspire our process.

**STEPS**

**PLANNING THE INTERVIEW**

1. **Find the right person:** Who is an influencer or heavily influenced by your system? Who will tell the best stories, who will be the most inspirational, who will uncover the most unmet needs?

2. **Make an interview guide:** Use it as an outline for a conversation with your stakeholder. The guide creates a semi-structured conversation. It provides prompts so that you can control the flow of the conversation and cover all the topics that you need, without having to focus on structure.

**DURING THE INTERVIEW**

3. **No more than three people at the interview:** One to ask questions, one to record the conversation, and one to observe the non-verbal cues.

4. **One at a time:** Generally, it is best to interview people one at a time, at a time convenient for them, in an environment they feel comfortable in.

5. **Be attentive:** The interviewee is the expert, make eye contact and pay attention. Have someone takes notes, so the interviewer can focus entirely on the conversation. Don't correct the interviewee.

6. **Ask open ended questions:** Don’t ask yes or no questions. You are looking for inspiration—knowing that someone doesn’t like a service doesn’t tell you much.
EMPATHIC INTERVIEWING

7. Get permission: Take photos, record audio and video. These will be useful to you throughout the process. But get permission from the interviewee first.

8. Vary your collection: Don’t just write down what was said. Get direct quotes, record emotional responses, facial expressions, and environmental interactions.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

10. Unpack information immediately: Within an hour of the interview you should discuss and write down what your biggest observations were.

11. Scour for details: When you have time go back to your notes, photos, etc. and get the specific details to support your arguments and assumptions.

Helpful Hints

- Don’t put words into the interviewee’s mouth
- Probe by asking why questions

PRACTICE!

Conduct a 5 minute interview with your partner. The goal of the interview is to get to know them better and to develop an understanding of their values and motivations around the work they do. Take notes on the interview. Use the notes pages in the back of the booklet if you run out of lines.

- Where do you work?
- How did you get into this line of work?
- What do you love about your job?
- If you could change one thing about your work what would it be? (Why haven’t you changed it?)
- What is your vision for this work?
ARTIFACT INTERVIEWING

Adding artifacts to an interview is a simple way to get people to engage at a deeper level with the questions. There are a number ways that artifacts can be introduced into an interview, but at a basic level, the artifacts are simply used to help the subject answer questions.

**STEPS**

1. Identify the focus of the interview
2. Assemble a group of inspirational or representative images or objects
3. Ask the interviewee a question related to the topic
4. Ask them to select an object that represents their response
5. Have the user explain why they chose the object and what it means
6. Repeat with other questions

**Helpful Hints**

- Use images instead of objects
- Ask people to create complex stories with multiple objects

JOURNEY MAPPING

A journey map is an opportunity to visualize somebody’s journey through their day, their week, or even a specific task or experience. When used in an interview, the routine map can lead to additional learnings about the interviewee’s unique perspective when going through a particular activity or experience.

**STEPS**

1. Find the person/user you’ll be interviewing
2. Identify a journey that this person goes through that you’d like to learn more about
3. Ask your interviewee to map their journey along a timeline
4. Encourage the interviewee to share:
   - A beginning and an end
   - People and places involved
   - Emotions experienced
   - Positive moments
   - Challenges or pain points
5. Notice body language and facial expressions to indicate emotional levels at various points in the journey.
6. Take notes and record your learnings: Where is there an opportunity to improve the interviewee’s experience?
OBSERVATION

Allows us to see behaviors and actions.

OBSERVATION TIPS

1. Beginner’s mind
   • Don’t be critical; have an open mind.
   • Remain unbiased.

2. Go where the stakeholder is
   • Observe people in their natural environment.

3. Observe
   • Look for shifts in behavior.
   • Notice body language.

4. Record and discuss
   • Take notes.
   • Discuss them with team.

5. Find the extreme
   • Find extreme users, outliers, and experts.

6. Build empathy
   • Always assume they know more than you do.
   • See through their eyes.

7. Self documentation
   • Give people camera or have them keep a diary.

8. Do it yourself
   • Go beyond watching and try/experience the service or product.

3-2-1 REFLECTION

What are 3 things that stood out to you from this material?

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What are 2 questions that this material has provoked?

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What is 1 way you will use this material next week?

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________________________________________________________________________
THANK YOU!

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