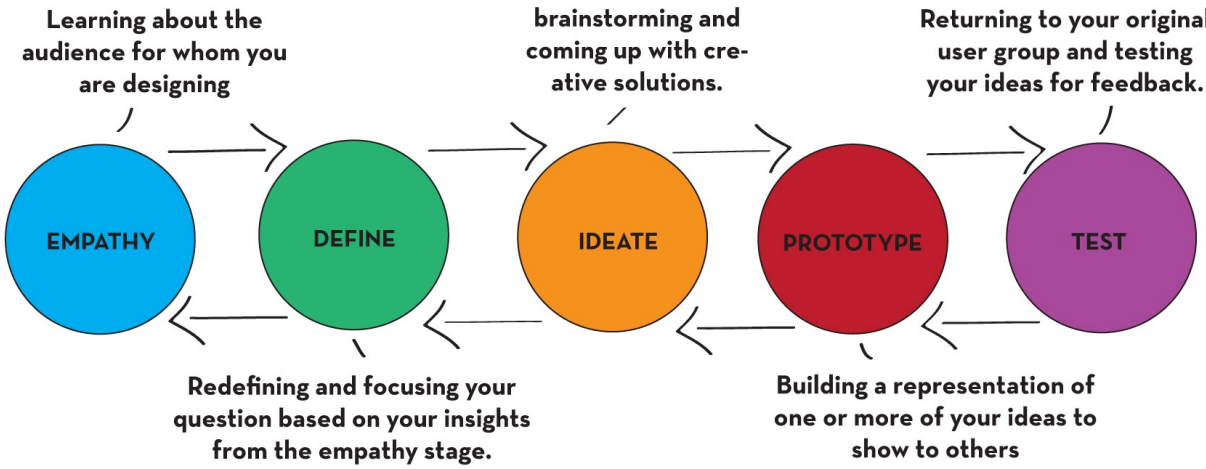
Design Thinking — A Mindset for Institutional Change

- Human-Centered
- Speculation-Driven
- Learning Through Making
- Solution-Focused



Empathy: Who are you designing for? Does your thinking take into consideration all your students? Your colleagues? How can – how should – your design take into consideration who you students are when they enter your curriculum? Where do you want them to be in Year 2, 3, etc.? How will you measure this? Where are the best strategic opportunities for doing so? Who do you hope they will be as learners, professionals, citizens – people – at the end of their journey through your undergraduate experience? How will you know? Who are you engaging in you redesign? What are their cares and concerns?

Define: What is the problem your change is attempting to solve? What are its multiple moving parts? Based on your work in the empathy stage, what new insights/nuances need to be addressed as you define the problem.

Ideate: This step is about generating as many potential solution as possible. To do that, we are going to start by suspending judgement on ANY idea. We will take real world constraints into consideration in the next step. Can you identify and then table (for now!) those concerns that are barriers to creative brainstorming? How many creative solutions can you generate? When reviewing your solutions, frame your feedback to generate more creative conversations – "I like… I wish… I wonder…."

Prototype: Can you map the learning you are trying to assess across your curricular/co-curricular experiences, not just to an isolated course or experience? How are you addressing issues of alignment, scaffolding, and scaling? Can you articulate "To what end?" – to what end are you changing your approach to assessment? Prompt others to share their feedback with you "I like… I wish… I wonder…"

Test: What is your game plan for testing out your ideas on campus? Are you going to pilot? What evidence do you need to garner to make a compelling case? Who are your allies? What obstacles will you face? How will you return to empathy to navigate, synthesize, and accommodate the feedback you receive?