The IDEA Lab: Developing Opportunities Across Differences

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi, the traditional owners and custodians of the unceded territory on which the University of Michigan-Dearborn sits, in an area also known as the Waawiyaataanong ("At the Curved Shores"). We pay our respects to their elders--past, present, and emerging.

"We are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems may cut across the boundary of any discipline."

-Karl Popper

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Why The IDEA Lab?

- Today's problems are complex

- Require teams of people with different perspectives to work across differences

- Requires people who have respect for different disciplines and are willing to share knowledge and connect their professional perspectives

- Get students out of their university program silos to learn these skills

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What Is The IDEA Lab?

- IDEA Lab was a 2019-2020 pilot project spearheaded by the Provost's office
    - Initially brainstormed by an interdisciplinary group of faculty members
    - Purpose: increase project-based, interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students on our campus that would teach Design Thinking skills.
    - IDEA = Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Artistry

- Stipulations from the Provost:

1) No extra work for course instructors; 2) Students could opt-in, therefore no penalty in terms of course credit/points if they did not participate; 3) Evaluate the process, not the product.

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What Is The IDEA Lab?
Learning Outcomes

- Work effectively across differences

- Problem-solve in interdisciplinary context

- Communicate and collaborate with a variety of audiences

- Develop comfort with ambiguity

- Practice design thinking process and principles

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What Is The IDEA Lab?
Core Principles

- 3 courses from 3 colleges

- Interdisciplinary project teams

- Project is component of course, but no letter grade

  - Failure is embraced

  - Focus is interdisciplinary design thinking and problem solving, not necessarily the end product

- Librarians are integrated into project teams: departure from normal instructional paradigm

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Why Center The Library?

- Positioning the library as a "third space" and home to interdisciplinary problem-solving, curiosity & exploration
    - Neutral territory outside the structure of the colleges
- Library as a supportive & nurturing place to learn, where grades aren't assigned
- Re-imagining information literacy instruction and contextualizing it in authentic ways (beyond traditional research projects/assignments)

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Pilot: 3 Teams

- The Library team:
  - 6 embedded Subject-Specialist Librarians
  - First Year Experience Librarian
  - Library Director
  - Head of User Services
  - Student Success Coordinator
- 3 instructors of the 3 selected courses
- Project client

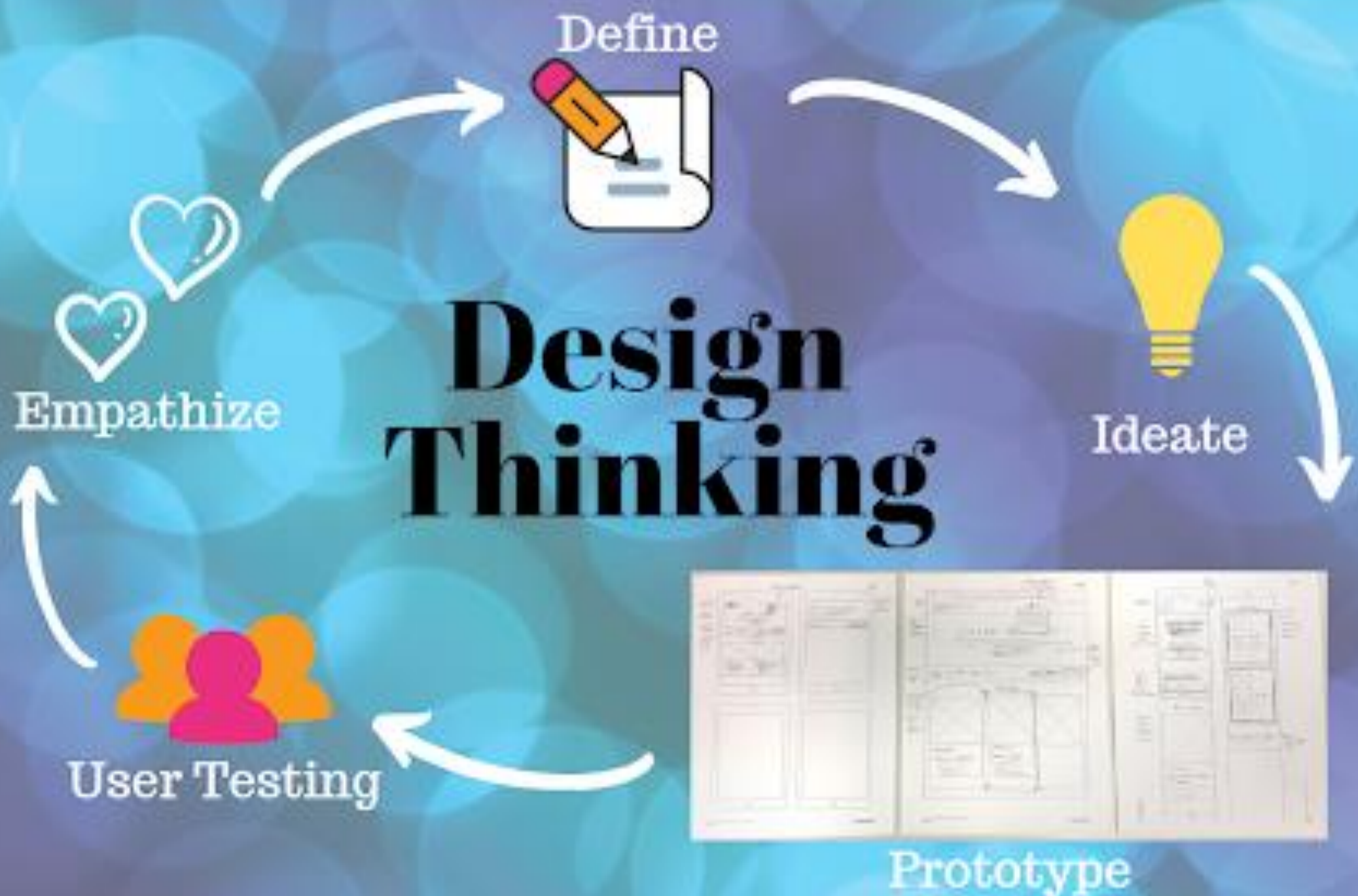**DEARBORN**
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Pilot: 3 Courses

- Math 472: Intro to Numerical Analysis (CASL)

- BENG 381: Bioprocessing (CECS)

- EDT 211: Design of Technology-Based Learning Solutions (CEHHS)
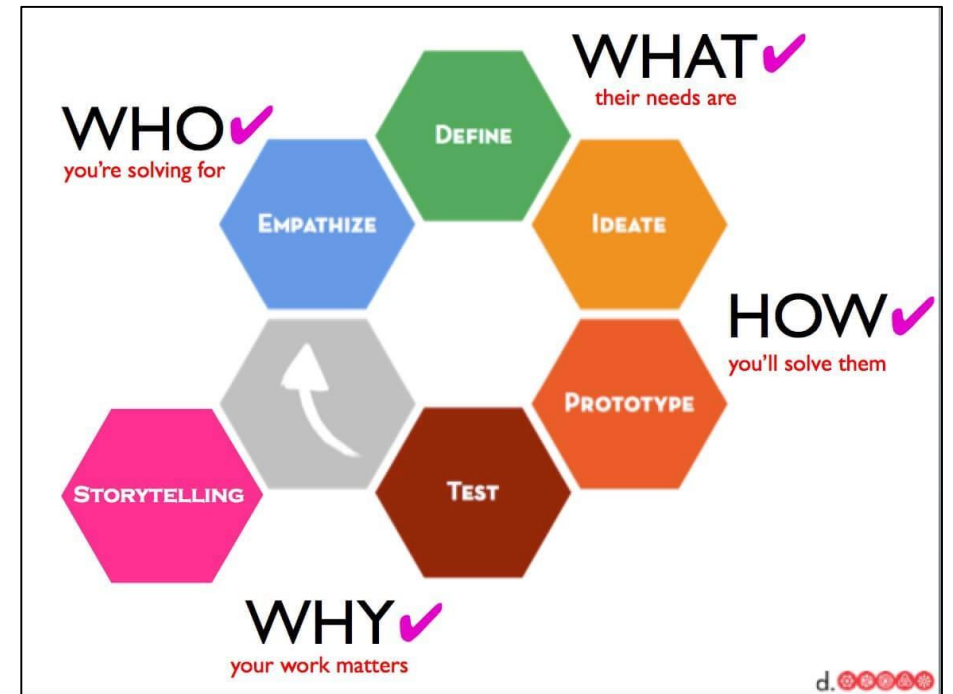
Pilot: Client

Design Thinking

Define

Ideate

Prototype

User Testing

Empathize

How: Design Thinking Process

- Same design process as students

- Pre-planning in summer

- Created structure around pain points we encountered

How: Structure & Scaffolding

- Pain Points = Project Milestones

- Developed project management documents

- Built-in check-ins throughout semester

How: Project Coach Model

- Pairs of librarian coaches assigned to student project teams

    ■ Embedded in Canvas teams

- Not just research questions – guided through design process

Project Coach Cards

RAYA SAMET
PROJECT COACH

—

I am here to help guide you to resources that support your project!

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After the Pilot Semester: Survey Results

- Overall: IDEA Lab useful practice for future jobs/career settings

- Suggestions for improvement:

  - More team member accountability

  - Dedicated class meeting/work time

  - Better incorporation into course (including assignments, credit)

  - More course professor involvement

Reflection: After the Pilot Semester

- Followed iterative Design Thinking process to refine the program between Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 using the student survey results

- Proposed changes due to lessons learned in 1st semester

How it started

How it's going

IDEA Lab: Future Unknown

- Pre-Pandemic: high priority highly visible campus project with campus leadership buy-in

- Post-Pandemic: new Provost, new campus priorities

What we do know

- We need to think more creatively and flexibly about our roles as librarians and the ways we can integrate information literacy on our campus (break out of the box)

- Be clear about roles and scope of all team members (on same page)

- We have to be strategic about positioning the library (and librarian expertise) when partnering with campus initiatives

- Taking risks and trying new things is a net benefit (we need to destigmatize "failure")

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Questions?

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