

Guide to Preparing Your Team

One of the key strengths of the design thinking approach is tapping into different perspectives, mindsets, skills, and experiences in order to look at things in a different way than usual. Working as a team creates a way to utilize this strength. Finding ways to collaborate effectively will allow teammates to help each other learn and improve the overall work. Below are tips to help foster an effective team:

Listen. It's not about showing off your expertise, but rather tapping into everyone's personal base of knowledge. Everyone is equal in the process.

Speak up. Sometimes being polite holds back the team. Respond honestly but constructively. Ask clarifying questions if you don't understand concepts.

Turn conflict into an area of exploration. If there are conflicting points of view, this means that there is some further exploration that needs to be done. Take note of the different perspectives and figure out what is needed for consensus - more information or time to reflect. Sometimes debate can actually stimulate ideas.

Build on each other's ideas. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, so if someone else's note sparks an idea, contribute your thoughts! Think of saying "Yes, and..." instead of "Yes, but..." to a teammate's idea.

Keep an open mind. We all have our own assumptions - forget what you know and look at teammates' suggestions with new eyes. Experiment.

Critique ideas, don't criticize individuals. Learning how to critique effectively makes us better communicators and collaborators. Have a discussion about how each team member gives and receives feedback in order to have constructive communication.

Think about context. Remember to consider both your in-person and online interactions. The tone that comes across in a face-to-face meeting may not come across in an email or text message.

Anticipate challenges. Focus on what your team will realistically face, like unexpected faculty meetings or a tough day with a student. Instead of reacting to these events at your own meetings, what can you do to actively get every team member on the same page? Do you need back up meeting times or a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting to check in on how everyone's day went?

Develop a Strong, Collaborative Team

Knowing how each individual in your group thinks and works will help your team. Start with how you think-- are you more of a divergent or convergent thinker? A divergent thinker is imaginative, and gets away from conventional ideas. A convergent thinker is pragmatic and works on getting to one solution. Both of these thinkers are needed in a team.

Read the characteristics below to see which you identify with.

Characteristics of convergent thinkers

- Prefers evaluating and selecting options
- Prefers decision-making
- Favors critical thinking
- Enjoys analysis

Characteristics of divergent thinkers

- Prefers generating options
- Preference for experimenting
- Favors unusual ideas
- Enjoys exploration and synthesis

Now, how assertive are you when you problem-solve? Do you ask more questions, or do you state what to do next? Again, both of these characteristics are needed in the design thinking process.

Read the characteristics below to see which you identify with.

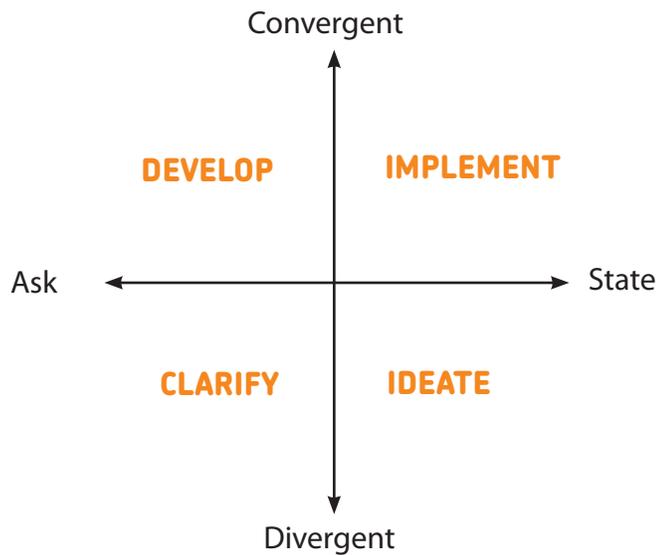
"Ask" Characteristics

- Likes to explore
- Evaluates risks
- Flexible, patient
- Engages others
- Speculative

"State" Characteristics

- Decisive
- Takes risks
- Bold, fast-paced
- Expresses opinions
- Directive

Now, with your two characteristics, plot where you fall in this matrix:



Converge and ask: Develop solutions
Converge and state: Implement solutions
Diverge and ask: Clarify solutions
Diverge and state: Ideate many solutions

Now, discuss your results with your team members. Are you each in your own box or are you clustered around one area? Having this information will help you identify where your team's strengths lie, and also where you may need to call on other types of thinkers.

Using your qualities from the matrix as well as your other strengths, and name your SuperPower: what you're really good at.

Some suggestions:

Systems Thinking: Seeing the big picture and how everything is connected

Empathizing: Understanding and relating to the experiences of others

Grit: Getting stuff done and pushing through the challenges

Imagination: Thinking up creative possibilities

Have each teammate share their SuperPower, and why they chose it. This is your SuperTeam!

Set your team norms.

Establish your own norms. Use the following questions to guide your discussion.

What previous team experiences have you enjoyed? What were the characteristics?

What previous team experiences did you not enjoy? What were the characteristics?

How do you like to receive feedback?

How do you like to give feedback?

What will be your process for making decisions?

What will be your process for mediating conflict?

Create a SuperTeam Manifesto

Now that you and your teammates all have SuperPowers, how will your SuperTeam work together? From what your team has discussed so far, create a manifesto to guide your team for the next six weeks and beyond. A manifesto is a written statement that describes the policies, goals, and opinions of a group. It includes the important values for your team, as well as the inspiration for bringing you together in the first place. You can have quotes, pictures, your team goals and/or norms... it's up to you!

Connected Learning Manifesto

a collaborative statement on teaching & learning in the digital age

We believe in **messy learning** within a **culture of collaboration**. Through non-linear, non-directed, self-initiated learning, collectively we find and **solve problems** within our networks, classrooms, communities, and the world.

Be a **learner first**, educator second. **Never stop** learning. It's all about asking hard questions and then **listening deeply**. It's a **synergy** that creates something greater than its individual parts and fertilizes your thinking.

Embrace **failure** as a learning strategy. You are teaching when you are **transparently sharing**. You are leveraging your passion to help others understand.

Community is built through the co-construction of knowledge. I believe that the collective **WE** is always smarter than **ME**.

Honor the gifts and talents each learner brings to collaborations. **Connected learning is wide open learning.**

Connections increase **serendipitous** learnings. Bring your **passion**. **Selflessly share** what you know. **Be collaborative.** Own it. Share with others. **There's nothing powerful about mere technology.** Real power rests in the hearts and minds of those I learn with online. **To question is the answer.**

Want to learn the most? Bring people not like you into your network. **Learn first, lead second.**

Cell phones **ARE** learning tools. Relationships **CAN** be built 140 characters at a time. **Connections enhance individual reflection.**

Connected learning is entrenched in a culture of action research and evaluation. **Fail Forward!**

Think, share, and then act collectively.

THE SELF-GUIDED EDUCATION MANIFESTO

THEORY IS OPTIONAL. PUT YOURSELF IN SITUATIONS WHERE LEARNING IS REQUIRED TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE. **PRACTICAL APPLICATION IS MANDATORY.**

LEARN WHAT YOU LOVE. **SHOWING UP IS JUST THE BEGINNING.** **ANALYZE EVERY INVESTMENT.**

MAKE MONEY. **LEARN WHAT YOU HATE.** **BREAK THINGS EVERYTHING IS A LESSON.** **EXPLORE.** **LEARN WHO YOU ARE.**

GET IN ARGUMENTS. **NOTHING IS CERTAIN.** **BUILD THINGS.**

EFFICIENT IS NOT THE SAME AS EFFECTIVE. **MOST EDUCATION HAPPENS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.**

SEEK OUT DIFFERENT WAYS OF DOING THINGS. **TRY EVERY MEDIUM.** **FIND PEOPLE WHO THINK YOU'RE CRAZY.**

WHAT IF THE SMART PEOPLE ARE WRONG? **ALWAYS MORE TO LEARN.**

DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING. **IT NEVER ENDS.**

PUNK Learning

D.I.Y. LEARNING

OUR MANIFESTO

THINK FOR YOURSELF

TAKE RISKS

DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY

DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO LEARN

D.I.Y. LEARNING

"PUNK LEARNING IS NOT A PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE. PUNK LEARNING IS ABOUT CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE FOR OURSELVES, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND SOCIALLY FROM THE WORLD AROUND US."

"A PUNK LEARNER IS A D.I.Y. LEARNER"

The Importance of Storytelling

As it is with collaboration, storytelling is an integral part of design thinking. When we talk about storytelling, it's about using this skill as a vehicle for change: It is a way to help connect meaning to information, to create connections between yourself and your audience, to shift people's thinking by tapping into empathy and emotion, and to make abstract concepts real and tangible. By giving your audience something to relate to, you can motivate and inspire them in wholly new ways. Storytelling plays a key role in enabling change through design thinking, which is why we have built it into the TD4Ed platform.

The Ariel Group, a training and coaching firm that uses storytelling in business, list several types of stories you can tell to inspire change:

- **Share Yourself:** Share moments that made you who you are, or that clarified your values so that others understand your perspective.
- **Share your Team or Organization:** Share the values of your team, organization, or community. What makes up your DNA?
- **Teach a Lesson:** How you learned something through failure or success; How you overcame resistance to change.
- **Provoke Change:** Create dissatisfaction with present; Share dangerous mistakes or assumptions; Establish the case for change; Create a vision for future state.
- **Change Perspective:** Allow your audience to see a problem through a different lens, and change the emotional climate.
- **Build a Relationship:** Sharing personal stories with different stakeholders can highlight the common ground between you.

Your team will have the opportunity to record your work online after completing each phase, which will be saved to your team's Project page. These prompts to enter your work are also meant to help your team craft the overarching story of your project. They help your team to create a compelling narrative that you can use to foster support from others, such as your administration team, your colleagues, and even other TD4Ed teams!

“If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.”

- Rudyard Kipling, on the importance of storytelling for connecting information to meaning

“If you want to get anything done in an organization, you need to know how to use story to move people.”

- Stephen Denning, on the importance of storytelling for change, innovation, and leadership

“The shortest distance between two people is a story.”

- Unknown, on the importance of storytelling for building connection and empathy

What's Your Story?

To begin to flex your storytelling muscles, we've borrowed an activity from storytelling.viz - which is a great site for resources and activities that build visual communication and storytelling skills.

1. Set a timer for 10 minutes.
2. Using 4 random pictures (you can use Flickr for inspiration), have each person construct a story in 10 minutes. Don't let the order of the images dictate the arc of your story. Use them for inspiration for your characters, setting, and plot development.
3. When 10 minutes is up, each person should share their story with the team. Give 3 minutes to share each story and 3 minutes for feedback from the other team members. Use the Tips we've provided to help focus feedback. Then, move onto the next person.
4. At the end, reflect on the different stories you heard.
 - How were they different?
 - How were they similar?
 - What aspects or principles of storytelling can you pull to use in your own team's story?

Keep these handy over the upcoming weeks and months as you go through the TD4Ed curriculum.