

Testing Guide

Based on what you want to learn, plan activities for testing your concept and getting feedback from others. The more experiential the activities are, the more you can learn about what's working and what's not. This is about showing your prototype, not just telling. Let the prototype speak for itself, and focus on what you want to learn.

**“The best way to experience an experience is to experience it.”
- Unknown (but a great Design Thinker!)**

Craft your plan

You can use the following framework to craft your exploration plan.

In order to assess whether our prototype is _____ (measure of success), we will be using _____ (testing method) with _____ (test group) through _____ (feedback method).

Examples:

To understand the experience of key people or users, we interviewed staff and leaders of homeless shelters. To gather inspiration from outside perspectives, we interviewed church leaders, Girl Scout representatives, and coaches from sports teams to learn about how to increase “buy in” and build intrinsic motivation in youths to participate in community work.

To understand the experience of key people or users, we used interviews, personal observations, and journaling activities with elementary classroom teachers to explore the impetus for the inconsistent use of technology as a tool for instructional delivery.

Measures of Success

Use your design principles from the Reflect phase as your measures of success. Think of them as the criteria for meeting your users' needs.

Test Groups

Refer to your stakeholders that you identified in the Define phase. Make sure to test with your key users as well as those that impact and are impacted by your design challenge.

Methods of Testing and Gathering Feedback

Share

Use your prototype to walk people through the experience.

Good for:

- If you have a mock up, experience map, storyboard, or scenario, present it to people and ask for their feedback. Gather their first impressions of your concept.
- For a quick way of gathering feedback, share it with others on Twitter or Facebook.

User test

Give a prototype to others to play with in order to understand its functionality and usefulness.

Good for:

- If you have a 3D prototype, consider having people voice their thoughts as they "use" it and observe what they do. Conduct an interview with them afterwards to understand what they liked and what could be better.
- Consider presenting your prototype with "competitors" (or several other versions of your prototype) so your users can compare and contrast between them.

Role play

Determine who the key users are in your concept, and assign those roles to team members—or even users themselves. Decide on the situation or context (there may be several you want to try), and act out the experience.

Good for:

- If you are developing a new service, process, or experience, consider using role play to show the impact of your idea to others.
- Set up an activity or scenario as if it were real, and observe people's reactions while they are acting out the experience.
- As you are role playing, take note of the aspects that aren't working as you had expected during the role play. Interview those who watched to gather their feedback.

Testing Preparation Checklist

Before you go out “into the field” (as we say), make sure you’ve thought through the following items.

- Have you decided on each team members’ responsibilities (i.e., all doing separate testing sessions, in pairs, or as a whole team)?
- Have you identified specific people you will be engaging to test?
- Have you scheduled a meeting time with them?
- Have you let them know if and how you will be recording your session (notes, voice recorder, camera)?
- Have you prepared them for what you will be doing (make sure to let them know who will be there, what you will be doing, what the project is for, and how you will be using the information gathered from them—i.e., if taking pictures, may be sharing on public site...)?
- Have you created supporting materials you will need, such as user surveys or note-taking guides?
- Have you thought about who you might need to alert before testing your idea with others, such as securing permissions or getting buy-in from administrators?
- Have you thought about how you want to introduce what you are doing? Remember to tell them this is just a prototype, and that you need their honest feedback in order to make it as good as it can be. If you want them to focus on one aspect of it rather than others, let them know.