

Before the Meeting

Ice Breaker

- ★ Why did you apply to be an RSVP Ambassador? How do you hope to grow this year?
- ★ What gifts (assets) do you bring to the group?
- ★ What is one thing you hope to learn today? How can your "peers" support you?



Excellence and Equity

RSVP Summer Institute
August 7, 2026

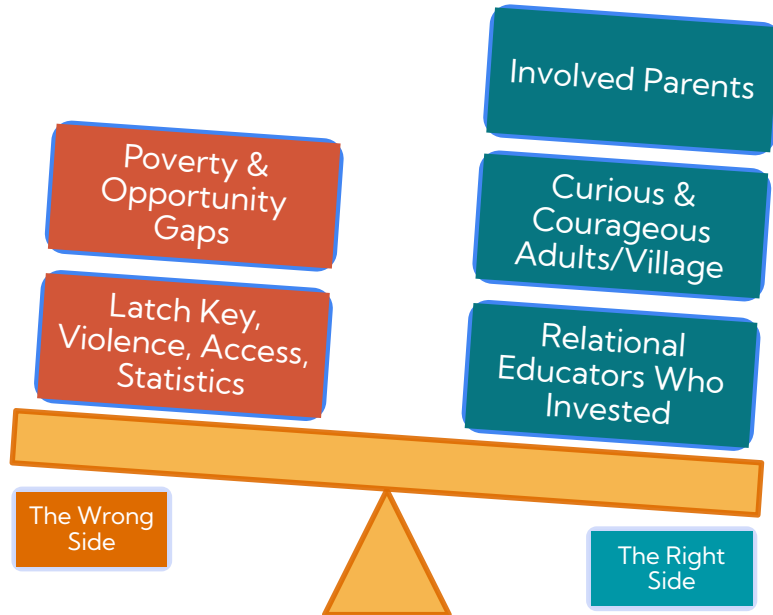
8:30 am – 4:00 pm
Browning High School



The Early Years

Grew up in Long Beach and Compton
California in a single family home.

Product of two 1st to Attend College
Parents & Private and Public Education



Overview of the Day

- Review RSVP Purpose and Alignment to V2035
- Engage in Welcome & Inclusion Activity
- Discuss Foundations for Co-design Partnerships & RSVP
 - Break
- Learn the Modes and Mindsets of Liberatory Design
 - Lunch
- Engage in a Liberatory Design Sprint to Internalize the Modes and Mindsets
 - Break
- Debrief the Design Sprint
- Offer Feedback on the Learning
 - Opportunity for feedback to Superintendent

Grounding Moment

- **Returning RSVP Members:** What was your best memory of last year's RSVP committee and why did you choose to participate in the leadership of the committee?
- **New RSVP Members:** What are you most excited to contribute this year?
- **Adult Facilitators & Adult Guests:** Why is this student advisory important to you?

Overarching Purpose

Raising Student Voice & Participation

Elevate student voice and student experience to inform school and district decision making (Core Values)

Provide a structure for two-way communication and co-design partnerships between adults and students (System Portrait)

Provide a safe place for students to activate the leadership skills that they are learning and/or developing in alignment with the Graduate Portrait

Build relationships between adults and students where all voices are equal (Adult Portrait)

Core Value

Centering Student Needs and Voice

We believe the every student has the ability to thrive and that success requires that we attend to the needs of the whole child.

We believe that incorporating student voice and building student agency, so that students can intentionally influence their own circumstances, are essential to our success in understanding and meeting each student's needs.

Graduate Portrait Elements



Students view diversities as assets to our inclusive community, understand the historical roots of racial and cultural biases that have led to institutional practices of oppression and know how to act in ways that promote equity and inclusion.



**Ethical
Problem Solver**

Students know how to apply diverse thinking, research, and problem-solving methods to develop creative solutions that address the needs of the people for whom the solution is intended.



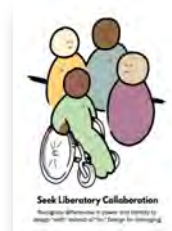
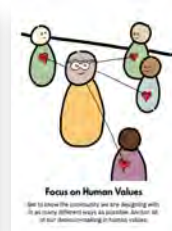
**Interdependent
Collaborator**

Students value collaborating in diverse teams and know how to harness the collective genius of their team members to maximize productivity and reach outcomes.



Welcome & Inclusion

Community Agreements 25-26



1. Ask questions beginning with “Tell me more...” to surface what we don’t know, rather than asserting what we think we know
2. Build from the strengths, stories, & skills of the team and honor the wisdom in the community by creating opportunities for people share
3. Keep the problem *and* solution spaces open by listening to multiple, diverse perspectives rather than rushing to fix, making sure to include the voices of those most impacted by the challenge or the solution
 - Create collaborative spaces that prioritize inclusion and allow well-thought-out ideas to form
4. Put aside preconceived notions of how things should be and “be fearless” (wild ideas to spark creative courage and outside-of-the-box thinking)
5. Create opportunities for sense-making before decision-making by listening to diverse voices

bell hooks, *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*

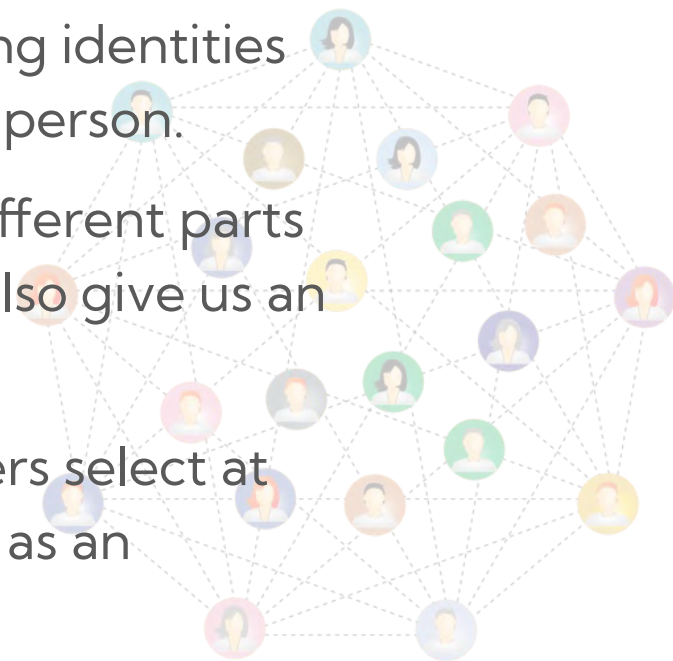


Image Source: [Lion's Roar](#)

"Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world."

Welcome and Inclusion Activity: Forced Choices

- We all have different, complex, intersecting identities that make experiences different for each person.
- This activity will help us to explore how different parts of our identity resonate with us, and will also give us an opportunity to learn about one another.
- Pay attention to which identities your peers select at different points in the exercise, and use it as an opportunity to learn more about them.



For each statement, select the identity that answers the question or resonates most with you.



- When I think about my inner circle, this is the identity that we have the most in common.
- This is the identity I think the most about.
- This is the identity I know the least about.
- This is the identity that I think most people judge me by.
- This is the identity I am the most unsure how to talk about.
- This is the identity that brings me the most joy.

Debrief and Discussion:

Select 1–2 of the following questions to discuss:

- What are 1–2 words to describe what this activity was like for you? Why?
- What was it like to have to choose only one identity for each statement? Why?
- When did you feel conflicted? Why?
- How might your responses change in different spaces and with different people? Why?

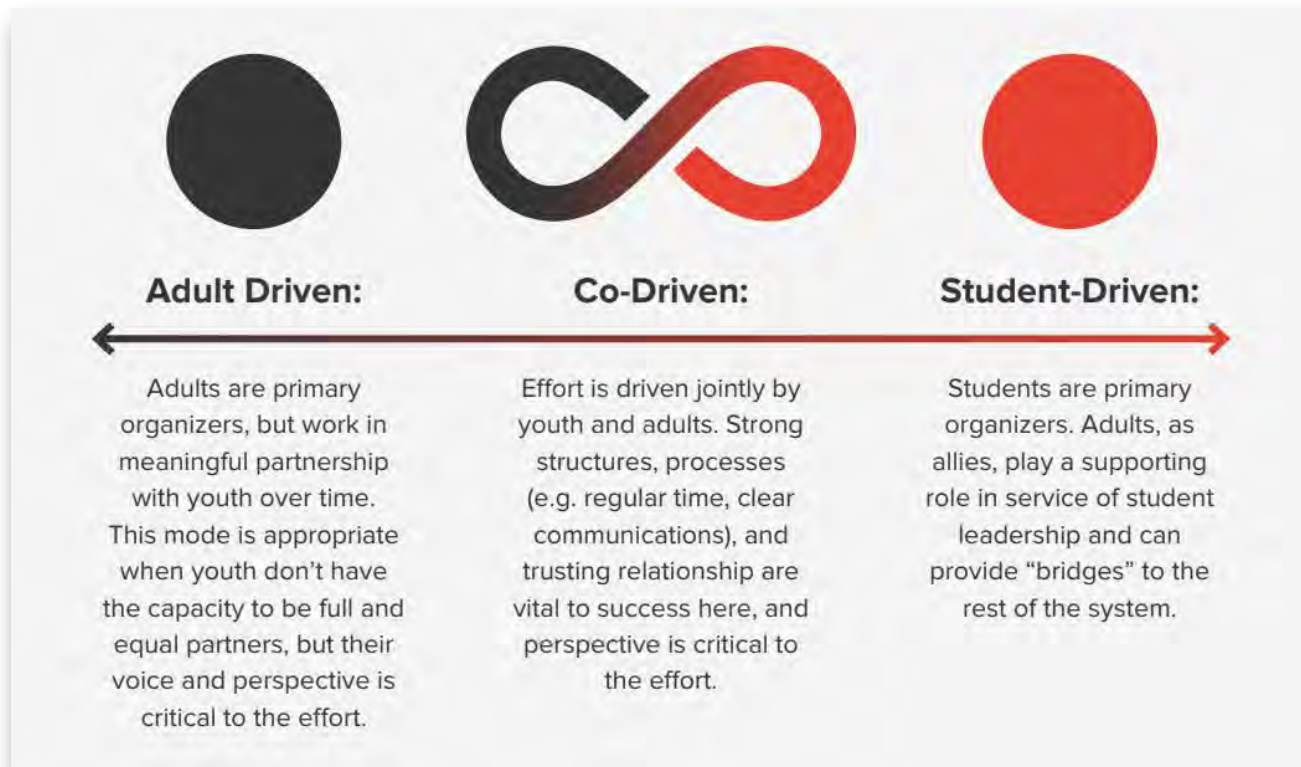


Co-Design Partnerships & RSVP 2025-2026

"Every organizing effort... needs to begin by exploring and clarifying the **intention** and **desires** of its members. What's possible now that we've agreed to try this together? How does the purpose of this effort connect to my personal sense of purpose, and to the purposes of the larger system?"

Margaret Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers (1996)

Co-Design



Student Voice and Leadership

Students are often ready to express their needs and desires (use their voice) and take on more leadership than adults are ready to invite. That said, there are important skills and mindsets for students to learn that support their own equity leadership development. The following table was adapted from Californians For Justice, 2022.

Not Partnering	Being Heard	Collaborating	Leading
Dismissed, Tokenized, Marginalized	Episodic	Partnering over time	Stepping forward
	Students articulate their perspective, serve as data source, provide feedback	Students involved as stakeholders, collaborate with adults, co-construct decisions	Students identify problems, generate solutions, direct collective activity
	Expression, Consultation	Participation, Partnership	Activism, Leadership



Adult Partnership

Adult Partnership

Adult educators need to consider where they need support or guidance in order to partner with students in liberatory ways in service of equity. It is important to name the need to tend to this as a growth area and provide a way for adults to develop their own capacity as liberatory partners to students.

Not Partnering	Hearing	Collaborating	Supporting
Dismissive, Paternalistic, Tokenizing	Episodic	Partnering over time	Stepping back
	Adults learn to learn from youth; decenter own adult perspective	Adults learn to partner with students; recognize the necessity of youth input	Adults learn to transform power more broadly and sustainably

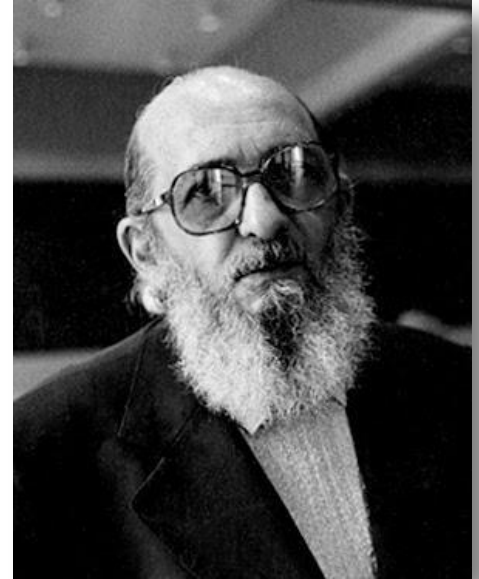


Is Partnership Enough?

"The challenge is that we are all the inheritors of previous systems of oppression that have shaped our current perceptions of reality.

It is quite difficult to be fully aware of the current moment and our existing limited-situations without intentionally noticing and reflecting in order to act in the world for our own liberation."

Paulo Freire

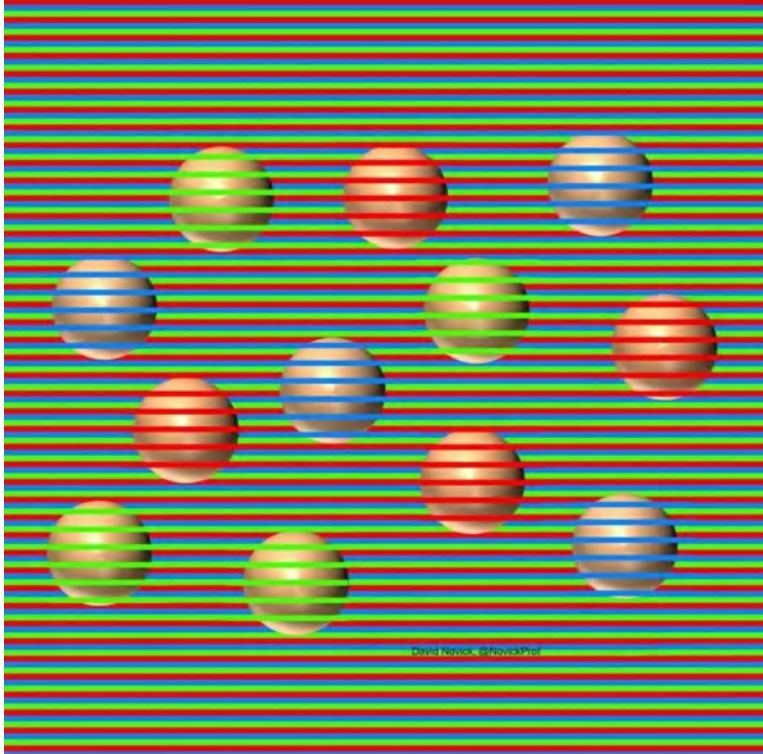


We can't afford to
continue to think in
the same ways we
always have and yet
somehow expect
different results.



Photo by [David van Dijk](#) on [Unsplash](#)

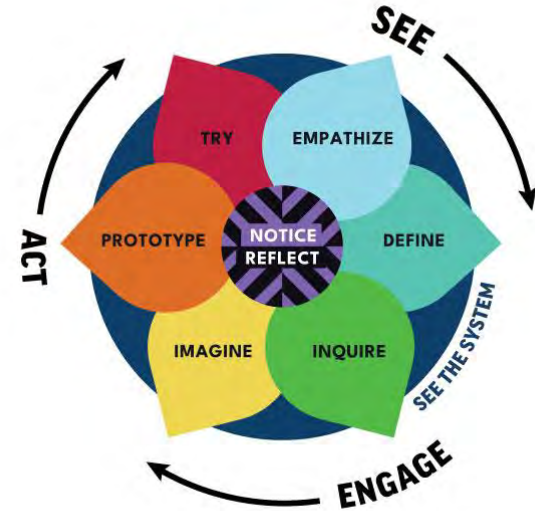
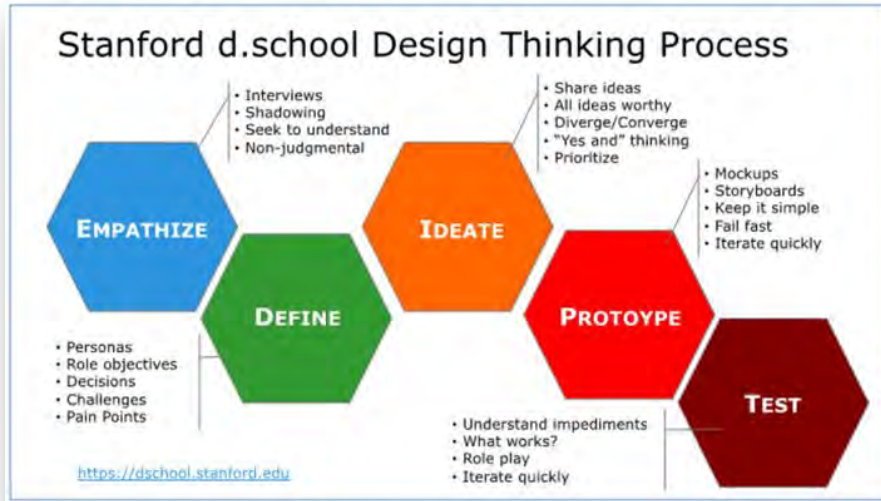
Notice & Reflect



- ❑ What do you see? Describe it in as much detail as you can.
- ❑ What if I told you that each "ball" or circle is actually the same color? How does that affect what you see?
- ❑ How might this relate to what we hope to the conversations we have been having today?

Intro to Liberatory Design

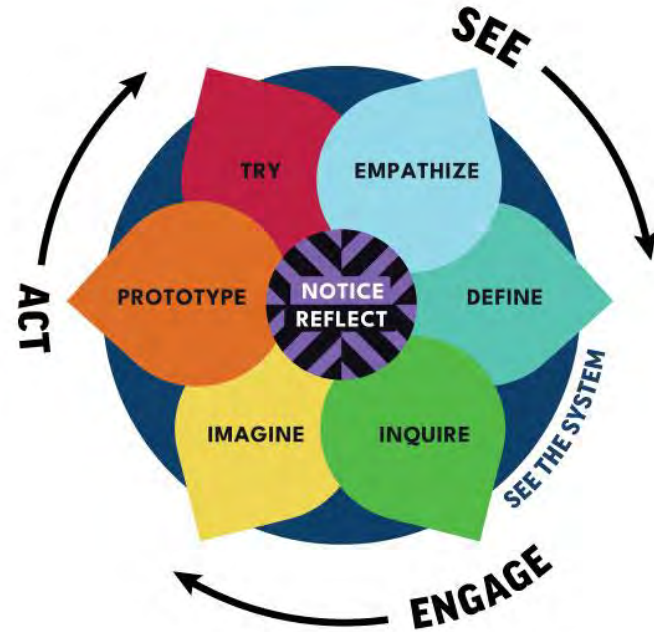
From Design Thinking → Liberatory Design



Liberatory Design

Take a moment to study this image that describes the Liberatory Design process.

- How is it similar to Design Thinking?
- How is it different from Design Thinking?



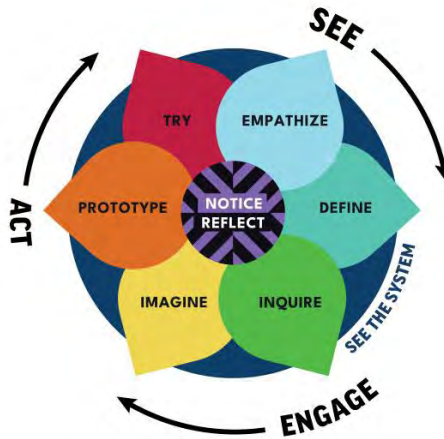
Source: [National Equity Project](#)



MINDSETS



MODES



Components of Liberatory Design

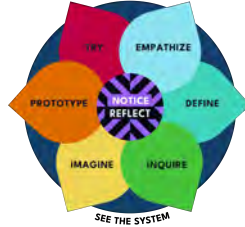
Liberatory Design Mindsets: Mindsets that can be used creatively to invoke stances and values to ground and focus your design practice.

(Ways of *being*)

Liberatory Design Modes: Types of action that provide process guidance for your design practice.

(Ways of *doing*)

NOTICE and REFLECT are at the heart of liberatory design...



Helps designers & leaders:

- Practice **self-awareness** (own identity, values, emotions, bias, power, assumptions)
- Collectively build **situational awareness** (context, people, power, history, current state)

Helps designers & leaders:

- **Pause** mid-stream to **reflect** on actions, impact, emotions, relationship
- **Adjust** our intentions, presence, direction

The liberatory design **mindsets** support these.

Liberatory Mindsets



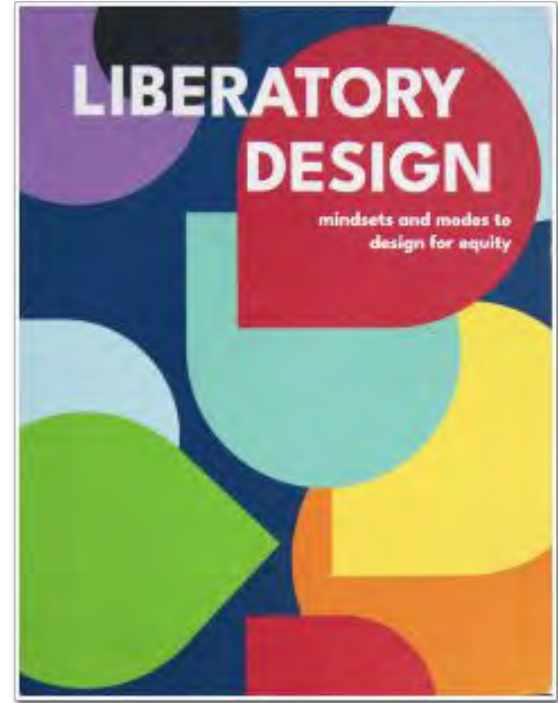
Making Meaning: Liberatory Mindsets

Divide the mindsets up among your group.

Take two minutes per mindset to learn as much as you can about the ones you are assigned.

Be prepared to share your “first draft summary” of the mindsets you are assigned in your own words.

- 30 seconds to share each mindset



Observe: Liberatory Design Mindsets

Be prepared to discuss:

- Where do you see evidence of the mindsets?
- Where are there missed opportunities to engage the mindsets?



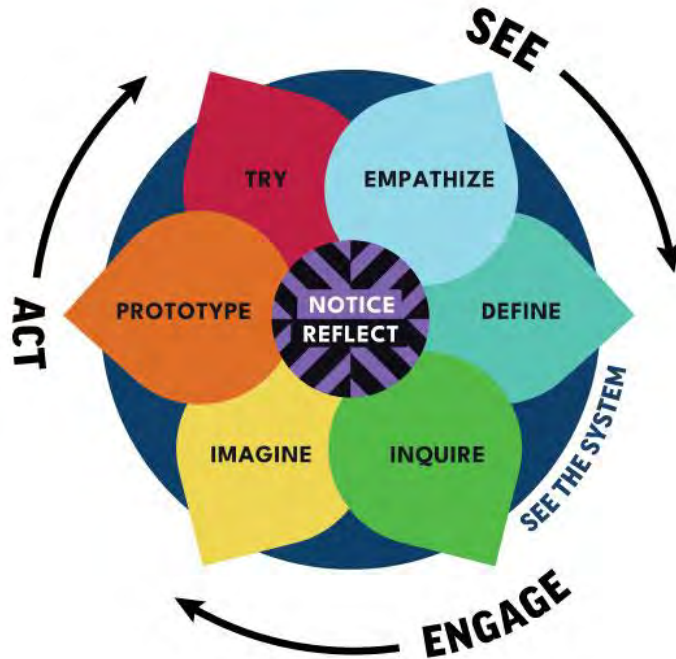
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Liberatory Design – Designing “With”



Deeper Dive: Modes of Design



Empathize

Empathy is the foundation of a human-centered design process. To empathize, you:

- Observe
- Engage
- Immerse



The unreflective use of statistical methods can be misleading and even harmful, especially when explaining the problems of communities that have been othered...Quantitative data is too often regarded as neutral and detached from influences of history, power and place.

Qualitative analysis tells us about agency, the hopes and plans of people, the barriers they encounter, their failures, and their sources of pride, joy and dignity.

Adapted from The Sociology of W.E.B Du Bois by Itzigsohn & Brown



W.E.B. Dubois

Human Insights Missing From Big Data



Making Meaning

In pairs, discuss the following:

- How does the video affirm and/or challenge your understanding of stories as powerful levers for insight?

In small groups, discuss the following:

- What lessons can we carry from the video in our work?

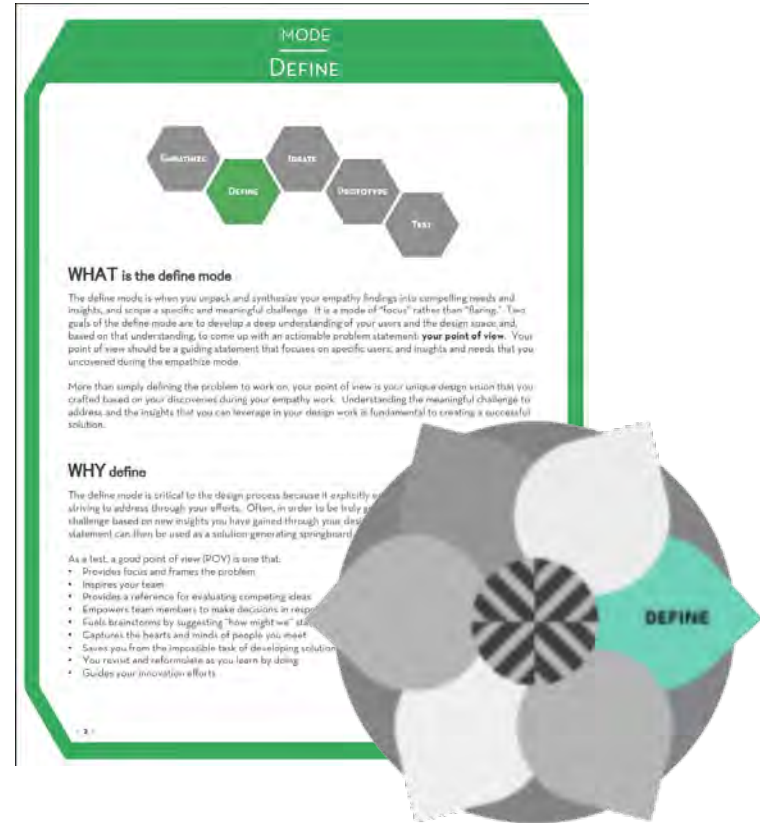
Make 1 commitment that you hope to enact as result of the video.



Define

Unpack and synthesize your empathy findings into compelling needs and insights, and scope a specific and meaningful challenge.

“Focus” rather than “flare”
How might we....



Define



_____ needs a way to

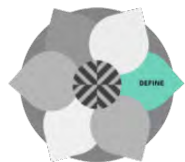
because (or but or
surprisingly)_____.

Leads to "How Might We..."

METHOD POINT-OF-VIEW MADLIB



Define



Complete multiple Point-of-View Madlibs below to create multiple opportunities for innovation.

(_____ needs a way to _____
because (or but or surprisingly)_____.)

Eg .1: Jaxson Jackrabbit, who is African American and uses a wheelchair to navigate the world, needs a way to participate in intramural athletics at our school; surprisingly, he wants more than a team manager role that feels tokenizing.

Eg .2: Rachel Raptor, a seasoned math teacher, needs a way to make her complex math content accessible to multilingual learners without watering down the rigor, but she doesn't speak a second language so she finds it difficult to make connections..

Use the "How might we...?" frame to create at least 2 HMW statements for each POV Madlib.

Eg .1: How might we "reimagine" intramural sports so that they center the needs of students with physical disabilities?

How might we make physical disabilities an advantage in our intramural sports programs?

Eg .2: How might we make student multilingualism a "super power" that teachers can leverage in teaching complex content?

How might we provide "in time" translation of complex content into a students' home language?

Inquire: Check Yourself



INQUIRE

Inquiry as defined here is about navigating the ambiguity and uncertainty of “not-knowing” by taking “safe to fail” actions. This can reveal important information about the context and equity challenge. It can also help identify a direction for prototyping.

When...

- You want to create the space for collective sense-making, inquiry, and discovery that shifts the power and agency to the stakeholder.
- You need more clarity on a direction to head in to define and co-design malleable solutions in an equity challenge.

Key Questions to Ask

- What do we still need to better understand – about our stakeholders, the system, and what is creating the inequity we are focused on?
- What are available opportunities to try small things that will reveal more?

22



Imagine (Ideate)

Generate radical design alternatives, "going wide" in terms of concepts and outcomes.

"Flaring" rather than
"focusing"

Yes, and....



Imagine (Ideate)



One Conversation at a Time

Go for Quantity

Headline!

Build on the Ideas of Others

Encourage wild ideas

Be Visual

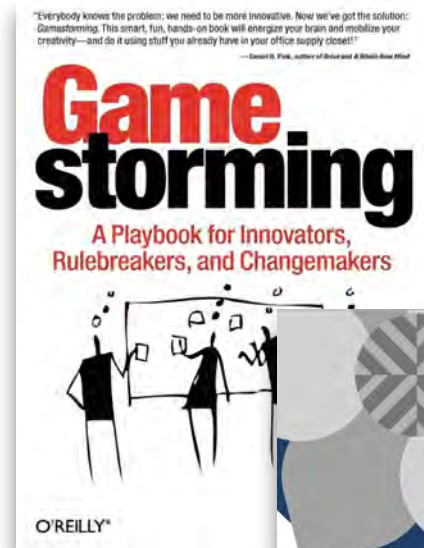
Stay on Topic

Defer Judgement -
NO Blocking

Consideration: Anti-Problem Explained

"The Anti-Problem game helps people get unstuck when they are at their wit's end. **It is most useful when a team is already working on a problem, but they're running out of ideas for solutions.**

By asking players to identify ways to solve the problem opposite to their current problem, it becomes easier to see where a current solution might be going astray or where an obvious solution isn't being applied."



SEE THE SYSTEM

Seeing the System enables us to identify potential equity challenges, what about the system is producing these, and what we need to learn more about as we engage in empathy work.



Recognize

Learn to see how identity has shaped

Recognize Oppression

Why?

Inequities do not exist in a vacuum. They are shaped by oppression and design decisions made across history. Oppression plays out on many levels (individual, interpersonal, institutional, systemic, and structural) - and across various forms of identity.

Liberatory Design enables us to better understand oppression's causes and more effectively design to catalyze liberation.

How:

- Name identity-related patterns of inequity we see in this context.
- Listen to the experiences of those most negatively impacted
- Identify what designs (structures, policies, processes, practices) over time have produced these - intentionally or unintentionally.
- Notice how our own identities and positional power shape what we see and hear and how we frame challenges.



Embrace Complexity

Why?

Equity challenges are complex; however, there is often urgent pressure to quickly "fix" them or develop "solutions" - which usually leads to ineffective results and unintended consequences.

Complex challenges don't have ready-made or reliable solutions. So keep the "problem space" open - i.e. seek to better understand the various factors at play in the challenge while simultaneously learning about what approaches are more likely to be effective.

How:

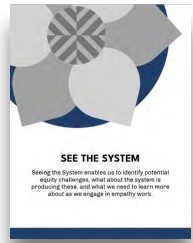
- Acknowledge the confusion and discomfort caused by the uncertainty present in our work.
- Bring together multiple perspectives on the challenge, especially from those most harmed, to open up ways of thinking.
- Create opportunities for sense-making before decision-making.

Reframing Problems as Anti-Problems

As a table group, select ONE dilemma to tackle together.

Challenge	Anti-Problem
Black student sense of belonging	How can we ensure that our Black students <u>NEVER</u> feel a sense of belonging and safety (physically and emotionally)?
Lack of diversity in workforce	How can we ensure that our system <u>REPELS</u> employees of color from joining our workforce?
Parent/caretaker sense of welcome	How can we ensure that parents feel <u>UN-WELCOMED</u> at our school/office?
Declined attendance	How can we ensure that students <u>HATE</u> coming to school?

Anti-Problem: Steps for your reference



3:00

Individually (3 min)

- Brainstorm as many ideas as you can in response to the prompt your group selected (one idea per post-it)

07:00

As a group (7 min)

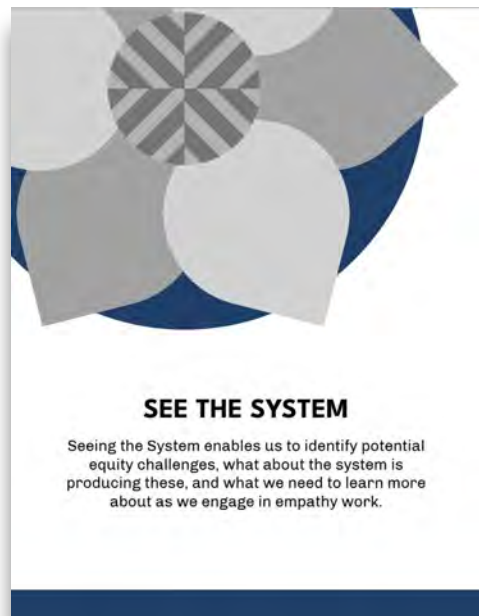
- Take turns sharing your ideas
- Group like ideas with one another

07:00

Discussion (7 min)

- What themes or patterns emerge?
- What problematic systems and structures did you identify?

Pre-Mortem the Anti-Problem



- What did we learn from this process?
- Now that you know the aspects of the challenge that might be rooted in “hidden” systems that we have inadvertently perpetuated...
 - How can you disrupt the patterns that have accelerated or amplified the challenge?
 - How might you prepare a response for each? (PRE-mortem)

Prototype

Get ideas and explorations out of the head and into the world.
Takes a physical form.

"Low resolution" v.
"High resolution"



Prototype

Low-resolution (rough representations)

- Storyboarding
- Sketching or diagraming
- Paper interface (eg, app)
- Lego prototype
- Role-playing
- Wireframes



Prototype



The Rational Choice



Most Likely to Delight



The Darling



The Long Shot

Try

Opportunity to get feedback on solutions, refine them to make them better, and continue to learn about users (re-empathize for even clearer re-defining).





Practice self-awareness (identity, emotions, power) and situational awareness (context, people, history)

Pause to reflect on actions, impact, emotions, relationship - and adjust intentions, direction, presence

Share prototypes with stakeholders - to learn and improve your design

Listen to stories from those impacted by the challenge - and build relationship in the process

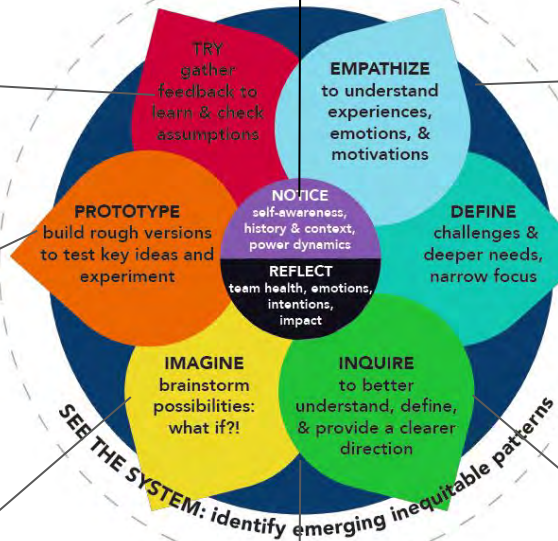
Build rough versions of potential approaches - to help you think and learn

Frame the challenge and opportunity; determine how complex it is -- and if we need to understand it better before designing

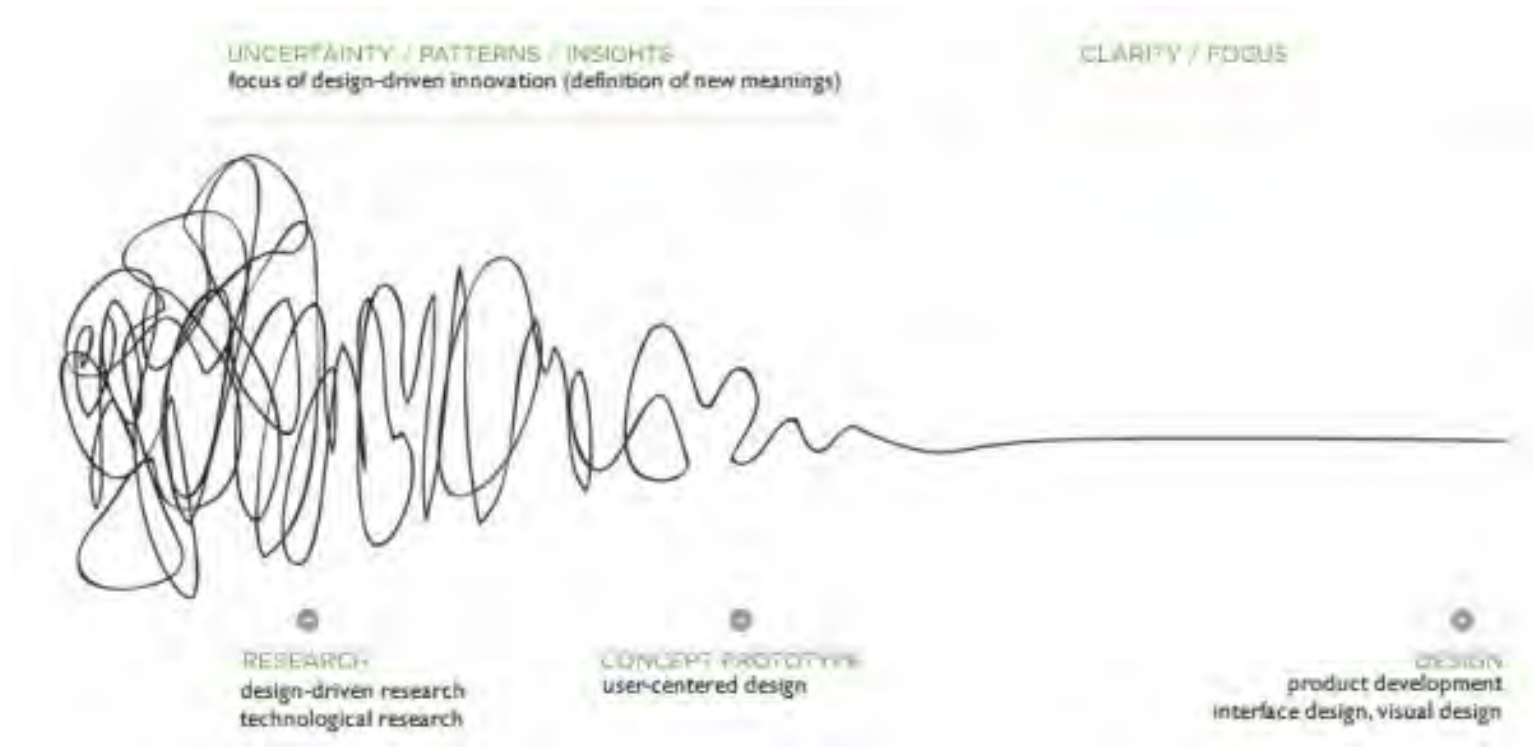
Get outside of your box and imagine “what if?!”

Recognize patterns of inequity, look at the system creating those—and identify a challenge to address

Design small “safe-to-fail” actions to learn more about your situation - to inform your design direction



So how does it all fit together?



Source: Brian Mathews

<http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/theubiquitouslibrarian/2013/09/18/moving-from-data-driven-to-design-driven-innovation/>

Liberatory Design Sprint

Design Challenge

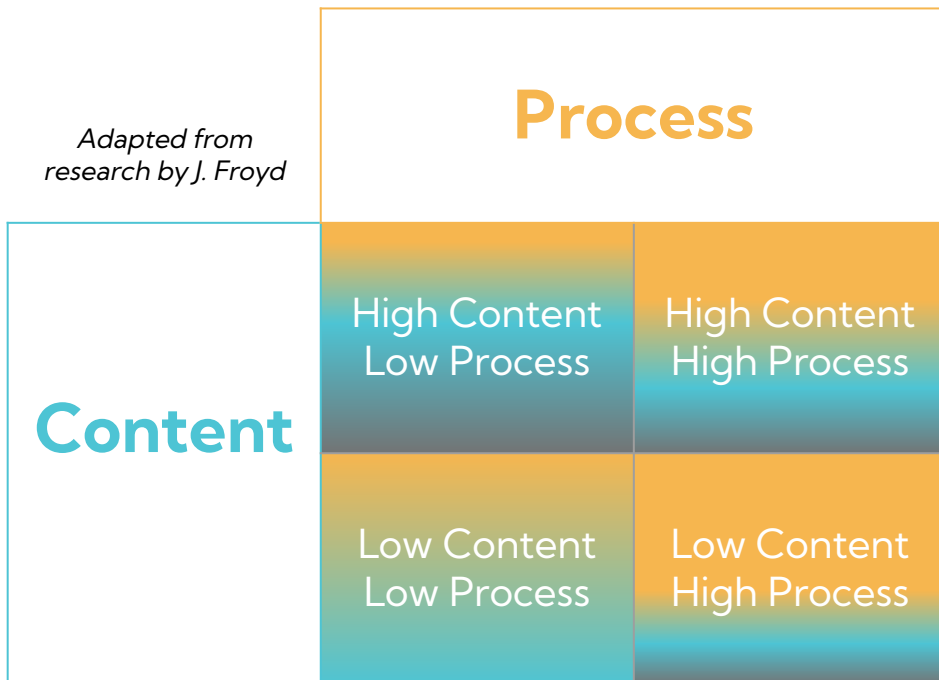
Task:

Deepen experience with Liberatory Design by engaging in a LOW content, HIGH process design sprint

Challenge:

Redesign the school backpack

*Adapted from
research by J. Froyd*



Notice & Reflect

- ❑ Who are you? What are the key identity markers that you want to center in your awareness today?
- ❑ How are you situated in relation to privilege, this challenge, and the person with whom you are paired?
- ❑ How can you make sure that you are practicing self-awareness throughout the process?



Empathy Interview

1 Interview: What are their painpoints?

6min (2 sessions x 3 minutes each)

Notes from your first interview



Empathy Interview: Dig Deeper

2 Dig deeper: Follow-up on interesting answers...

6min (2 sessions x 3 minutes each)

Notes from your second interview



Switch roles & repeat Interview



Define: Capture Findings

3 Capture findings 3min

Goals and Wishes: what is your partner trying to achieve through

?

use verbs



Insights: new learnings about your partner's feelings and motivations. what's something you see about your partner's experience that maybe s/he doesn't see?*

*make inferences from what you heard



Define: Point-of-View

4 Take a stand

with a point-of-view 3min



partner's name/description



needs a way to

user's need

because (or "but ..." or "Surprisingly ...")

[circle one]

insight

3:00



Inquire: Check Your Assumptions

4 Take a stand with a point-of-view 3min



partner's name/description



needs a way to

user's need

because (or "but ..." or "Surprisingly ...")

[circle one]

insight

4:00



Imagine (Ideate): 5 Radical Solutions

5 Sketch at least 5 *radical* ways to meet your user's needs. 4min



write your problem statement above

				
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4:00



Imagine (Ideate): 5 Radical Solutions

6 Share your solutions & capture feedback. 8min (2 sessions x 4 minutes each)

Notes



d.

Switch roles & repeat sharing.

8:00



Re-Imagine

7 Reflect & generate a new solution. 3min

Sketch your big idea, note details if necessary!



3:00



Prototype: Build Your Solution

8 Build your solution.

Make something your partner can interact with!



5min

d.



Try: Share Solution & Feedback

9 Share your solution and get feedback.

✚ What worked...

▣ What could be improved...

? Questions...

! Ideas...



7min (2 sessions x 3.5 minutes each)



Notice & Reflect

- ❑ Did the process “feel” liberatory? Why? Why not?
- ❑ How did your emotional state affect the way you showed up?
- ❑ How did you practice self-awareness? How did you succeed? How can you improve?



Debrief and Reflection

Graduate Portrait Elements

In what ways did you experience or grow in the following areas?



**Equity &
Inclusion Leader**

Students view diversities as assets to our inclusive community, understand the historical roots of racial and cultural biases that have led to institutional practices of oppression and know how to act in ways that promote equity and inclusion.



**Ethical
Problem Solver**

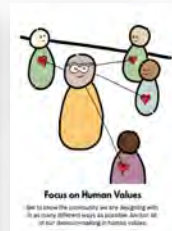
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Community Agreements 25–26



1. Ask questions beginning with “Tell me more...” to surface what we don’t know, rather than asserting what we think we know
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 - Create collaborative spaces that prioritize inclusion and allow well-thought-out ideas to form
4. Put aside preconceived notions of how things should be and “be fearless” (wild ideas to spark creative courage and outside-of-the-box thinking)
5. Create opportunities for sense-making before decision-making by listening to diverse voices

Closure & Feedback

What comes up for you as you read this quote now?



Image Source: [Lion's Roar](#)

"Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world."

bell hooks, *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*

"By centering students' needs through the liberatory design process, we repositioned students as centers of knowledge. We listened to them in ways that shifted our practice, and we recognized that both teachers and students have the capacity to educate each other... Our students recognized that their voices and perspectives mattered, and they began to advocate for themselves in new ways."

Jessica Lee Stovall, Lamar Timmons-Long, Thomas J. Rodney and Taylor Hall
"Black Teachers' Use of Liberatory Design to Promote Literacies of Healing" (Stovall 2023)



Superintendent Listening & Learning Session

As I embark on the first year serving our community as superintendent, I want to draw on the the wisdom and insights of our school and broader community. The West African Adinkra Symbol of Mate Masie helps root me in this value. It means, "What I hear, I keep," or "The wisdom and knowledge, I collect, I put in practice."

To that end, please take a moment to offer your insights on some key questions that build on themes and priorities that emerged during the Superintendent Search Process.

This information will help me to better understand your immediate needs and long term hopes for our collective journey.



Feedback



Please scan the QR code and take a moment to offer us your insights and feedback.

Your voice matters. We want to hear you!