



FIT9138 IS Analysis, Design and Systems Thinking

Week 4 Design Thinking Process: Empathy and Define

AIMS OF THE APPLIED SESSION

- 1) Reflect on and discuss the Design Thinking process, focusing on the **Empathy** and **Design** stages.
- 2) Conduct the **empathise** step by discussing and creating user **personas** and **scenarios** to better understand the needs, goals, and challenges of the users in the Design Thinking process.

STRUCTURE OF THIS WEEK'S APPLIED SESSION

- o Section A: Empathize and Define in Design Thinking (40 min)
- o Section B: Mini Case (Persona and Scenario of M-Pass Account Creation) (60 min)
- o **Break (10 min)**
- o Section C: In-applied class Quiz 2 (15 min)
- o Section D: Assignment 1 Q&A (45 min)

YOUR TASKS

BEFORE YOUR APPLIED SESSION

- Attend/listen to seminar 4
- Read: <https://web.stanford.edu/~mshanks/MichaelShanks/files/509554.pdf>

IN YOUR APPLIED SESSION

You will work with your fellow students and tutor through the Week 4 Applied activities.

Section A: Empathize and Define in Design Thinking

Source: Shanks, M. (2010). An introduction to design thinking process guide. Stanford University. <https://web.stanford.edu/~mshanks/MichaelShanks/files/509554.pdf#page=2.13>

Please read the excerpt below on “Why and How to Empathize” and “Why and How to Define in Design Thinking”. Then, answer the following questions!

WHY empathize

As a design thinker, the problems you are trying to solve are rarely your own—they are those of a particular group of people; in order to design for them, you must gain empathy for who they are and what is important to them. Observing what people do and how they interact with their environment gives you clues about what they think and feel. It also helps you learn about what they need. By watching people, you can capture physical manifestations of their experiences – what they do and say. This will allow you to infer the intangible meaning of

those experiences in order to uncover insights. These insights give you direction to create innovative solutions. The best solutions come out of the best insights into human behavior. But learning to recognize those insights is harder than you might think. Why? Because our minds automatically filter out a lot of information without our even realizing it. We need to learn to see things “with a fresh set of eyes,” and empathizing is what gives us those new eyes. Engaging with people directly reveals a tremendous amount about the way they think and the values they hold. Sometimes these thoughts and values are not obvious to the people who hold them, and a good conversation can surprise both the designer and the subject by the unanticipated insights that are revealed. The stories that people tell and the things that people say they do—even if they are different from what they actually do—are strong indicators of their deeply held beliefs about the way the world is. Good designs are built on a solid understanding of these beliefs and values.

HOW to empathize

To empathize, you:

- Observe. View users and their behavior in the context of their lives. As much as possible do observations in relevant contexts in addition to interviews. Some of the most powerful realizations come from noticing a disconnect between what someone says and what he does. Others come from a work-around someone has created which may be very surprising to you as the designer, but she may not even think to mention in conversation.
- Engage. Sometimes we call this technique ‘interviewing’ but it should really feel more like a conversation. Prepare some questions you’d like to ask, but expect to let the conversation deviate from them. Keep the conversation only loosely bounded. Elicit stories from the people you talk to, and always ask “Why?” to uncover deeper meaning. Engagement can come through both short ‘intercept’ encounters and longer scheduled conversations.
- Watch and Listen. Certainly you can, and should, combine observation and engagement. Ask someone to show you how they complete a task. Have them physically go through the steps, and talk you through why they are doing what they do. Ask them to vocalize what’s going through their mind as they perform a task or interact with an object. Have a conversation in the context of someone’s home or workplace – so many stories are embodied in artifacts. Use the environment to prompt deeper questions.

WHY define

The Define mode is critical to the design process because it results in your point-of-view (POV): the explicit expression of the problem you are striving to address. More importantly, your POV defines the RIGHT challenge to address, based on your new understanding of people and the problem space. It may seem counterintuitive but crafting a more narrowly focused problem statement tends to yield both greater quantity and higher quality solutions when you are generating ideas. The Define mode is also an endeavor to synthesize your scattered findings into powerful insights. It is this synthesis of your empathy work that gives you the advantage that no one else has: discoveries that you can leverage to tackle the design challenge; that is, INSIGHT.

HOW to define

Consider what stood out to you when talking and observing people. What patterns emerge when you look at the set? If you noticed something interesting ask yourself (and your team) why that might be. In asking why someone had a certain behavior or feeling you are making connections from that person to the larger context. Develop an understanding of the type of person you are designing for – your USER. Synthesize and select a limited set of NEEDS that you think are important to fulfill; you may in fact express a just one single salient need to address. Work to express INSIGHTS you developed through the synthesis of information you have gathered through empathy and research work. Then articulate a point-of-view by combining these three elements – user, need, and insight – as an actionable problem statement that will drive the rest of your design work.

A good point-of-view is one that:

- Provides focus and frames the problem
- Inspires your team
- Informs criteria for evaluating competing ideas

- Empowers your team to make decisions independently in parallel
- Captures the hearts and minds of people you meet
- Saves you from the impossible task of developing concepts that are all things to all people (i.e. your problem statement should be discrete, not broad.)

Questions:

1. Why is recognizing insights in the Empathize stage challenging? What cognitive factor contributes to this difficulty?
2. How to Uncover Deeper Meaning During an Interview in the Empathize Phase?
3. What are the three key elements of a point-of-view statement in the Define Phase?

Section B: Mini Case (Persona and Scenario of M-Pass Account Creation)

Activity: Mini-Case Practice – Monash Pass (M-Pass) Account Creation

Your task is to analyse the **Monash Pass (M-Pass)** account creation process by creating a **Persona** and a **Scenario** that represent the experiences of users (students).

You can refer to the official M-Pass guidelines for context:

<https://www.monash.edu/students/support/connect/m-pass/get>.

Instructions:

Step 1: Sit in your group

Step 2: Create a Persona

Each group will work together to create a detailed **Persona** representing a student using the M-Pass system. Use the following attributes for your Persona:

Persona Attribute	Description
Name	The name of the user.
Age	The age of the user.
Location	Where the user is based (e.g., on-campus, off-campus, international student).
Backstory	A short narrative about the user's background and experience with technology.
Motivation	Why does the user need to set up the M-Pass? What are they trying to achieve?
Frustrations	What challenges might the user face? (e.g., confusing steps, rejected photos).

Step 3: Develop a Scenario

Using your group's **Persona**, develop a **Scenario** to describe the user's experience during M-Pass account creation. Include:

1. **Context:** Where and when is the user creating the M-Pass? (e.g., at home, on campus, during orientation).
2. **Steps Taken:** Describe the step-by-step process the user follows to set up their account.
3. **Challenges:** What specific problems or frustrations do they encounter? (e.g., VerifyMe issues, unclear instructions).

	<p>4. Outcome: Was the user successful? How did they resolve any challenges?</p> <p>Step 4: Group Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present your group's Persona and Scenario to the class. <p>Step 5: Ensure you keep a record of your work, including the persona and scenario, as these will be used in next week's activity.</p>
Section C: In-applied class Quiz 2	
Section D: Assignment 1 Q&A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In your group, discuss the progress of your Assignment 1 2. Ask your tutor if you have anything to clarify.