# AML2155: Design Thinking and Idea Lab [CSEAIML]

Assignment 3

Team number: G1T7 (Arijit Sarkar, Bikram Mondal, Debashish Sarkar, Koushik Ghosh)

Team name: Investo

Background
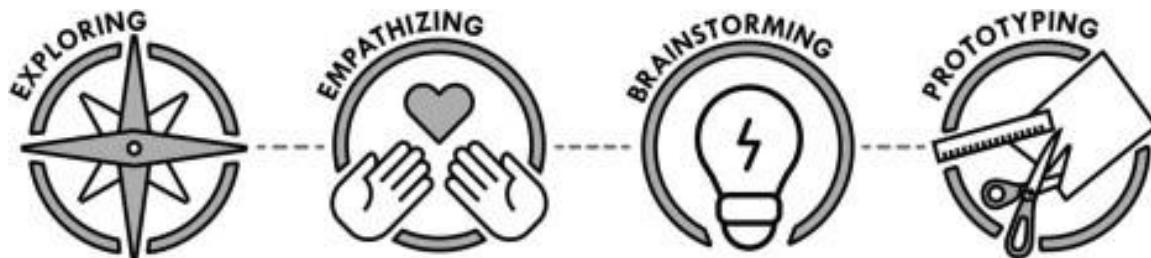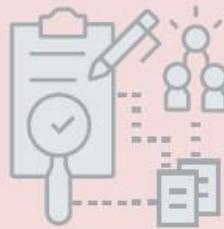
Figure 1: Stages of the Design Thinking Model

Activity 3.1

*a. **Each** of the four students in the team select and closely study *one* of the four steps in interviewing: 1. Recruiting 2. Preparing, 3. Conducting, 4. Documenting. All students study "What is it" and step 5. Synthesizing*

Interviews

Fundamental attitude: EMPATHIZE

What is it?

An interview is an essential tool in all phases of the design process for collecting information. Interviewing future users, clients or other stakeholders is a good way to empathize with them. Observation can be the basis for an interview. Andrew Travers mentions five steps in Interviewing For Research, A Pocket Guide:

1 recruiting
2 preparing
3 conducting
4 documenting
5 synthesizing

1 Recruiting

Carefully recruit the people you need for your research. Who is interesting to interview? How do you find those people and how can you approach them? Make a distinction between insiders that are professionally interesting for the design process and insiders that belong to the political arena of the organization. Involve known and unknown outsiders. When recruiting, pay attention to the following:

- Choose professionals who know the ins and outs of the organization and can provide you with detailed information that is needed for a successful design result.
- Invite people at strategic and tactical levels who are able to create support, goodwill and be fruitful for the design project.
- Do not only choose outsiders who are already familiar with the organization and satisfied with the 'old' product or service. Start looking for future customers, who can take a fresh look at the product or service and the organization in general.
- Make a profile of the people you want to talk to. If you are a recruiter this is certainly essential. For example, profiling can be done based on PERSONAS and CHARACTER PROFILES.

2 Preparing

Which interview setup you choose depends on where you are in the design process: will you use the interview to test a frame, a business (model), a rough or developed detailed prototype? Prepare yourself by making an appropriate interview schedule:

- An interview schedule consists of the main topics that are to be addressed. Do not formulate ready-made questions to avoid forcibly leading the conversation.

- Use models, prototypes and drawings to represent any ideas or hypotheses.
- Prepare the interviewees for what is to come: contact them in advance, introduce yourself and email any background information. Reassure the interviewees that no special preparation is needed.
- Report how the feedback will be used in the design process. Finally, also include practicalities, such as defining the location or setting, taking into account noise and loss of non-verbal communication when using technology such as phones or Skype and plan for sufficient travel time.

3 Conducting

Realize that someone is freeing up valuable time for sharing their thoughts, needs, opinions and experiences with you. So make sure you have a good conversation, for yourself and for the interviewee. A good conversation is not the same as a nice and pleasant conversation: ask critical questions, but be neutral; be alert, curious and 'the naive outsider'. That's how you make sure that the interviewee can be the expert who provides you with information.

A number of tips are:

- Use all your communication skills.
  - Use listening, summarizing and questioning as the basis for every interview. Practice your communication skills in advance on your design team or roommates (and note how much more information you collect).
  - Give the interviewee space and do not be afraid of moments of silence during the interview. Creating silence is a not-to-be-underestimated way to get the interviewee to process and perhaps provide additional information. A tactical sip of water or taking some notes is enough to create a moment of peace (meanwhile you can think if the conversation is going in the right direction).

- The question 'Can you tell more about it?' Always works well to encourage the interviewee and give him or her the feeling that what they are saying is important to you.
- Do you want to use IMAGINE Then do not use words but images or photos.
- Do not entice the interviewee to come up with solutions for the issue; the interview is not intended for this.
- Do not ask questions about hypothetical behavior: 'How would you travel to Paris?' In practice, people behave differently than they say (or think). So focus on observable behavior: 'How did you travel the last time you went to Paris? '
- Only distill information that is useful for the design process by understanding the observed behavior. Therefore, continue asking questions until you uncover the cause-effect relationship in the behavior. Ask 'why' at least five times.
- If there is a prototype: observe the reaction to this future design and see how the prototype is actually used. It is tempting to ask suggestive and closed questions to confirm your enthusiasm for the prototype. Prevent this by getting new information from this unique person by asking questions that can bust assumptions about the problem, the selected frame, the idea or the prototype.

4 Documenting

- Before interviewing, consider how you want the feedback from the interviews to be documented so that it later provides the information that helps the design process.
- Also consider in advance which method of documentation is most suitable to inform, motivate or convince the other members of the design team who were not involved in the interviews.
- Be careful when summarizing interviews. This can make the conversations seem too 'flat', leaving out details or 'irrelevant' comments which later may be the key to the right design.
- Record conversations: you do not know what you can get out of the interviews later.
- Write down your own thoughts during the interview in the margins and after the interview, take plenty of time to let the conversation sink in: What were the special moments, what insights have you gained from this unique conversation or what non-verbal hints did you get? What do you want to remember from this unique conversation and take back to the design process?
- Use this post-interview moment for self-reflection on your role as an interviewer: Which questions generated energy for the interviewee and what kind of questions did you ask? What do you want to take with you or explore in the next interview?

5 Synthesizing

After conducting the interviews, your head is full of ideas, (perhaps conflicting) information and different perspectives. How do you summarize a pile of different interviews that can inspire or influence insights for the design process? How can you get the feedback from the interviews and the information in your head translated and transferred to the minds of the whole design team? To do this, proceed as follows:

- Remember that with design thinking a conclusion about a design solution does not come from a generalization of all interviews, but arises from the uniqueness of a conversation, a highlight, a moment. Details are lost when analyzing data. It's the authenticity of that one conversation, its carelessness, chaos or the doubts and inconsistencies on the part of the interviewee, which makes the interview interesting.
  So keep far away from general conclusions or recommendations.
- Do not wait until all the interviews have been completed. Keep the design team involved and make sure the rest of the team can already get started based on the results.

- Use the fundamental attitude IMAGINE: tell the story of the interview to your design team and let them respond, ask questions and challenge you. STORYTELLING helps you to get to the heart of the message from the interview.
- Use the interviews to create CHARACTER PROFILES and PERSONAS or fine-tune the already created character profiles and personas.

b. As a team, write down at least eight (8) questions that you will be asking while interviewing design partners. Do not replicate of reuse questions from the questionnaire you developed in Lab 02. Questionnaires will be shared remotely with design partners; whereas, interviews will be conducted face to face.

Idea Validation & Motivation
I. What inspired you to build your startup idea, and how confident are you in explaining it to someone new?
II. How do you currently validate whether your idea resonates with potential investors or users?

User Behavior & Experience
III. How comfortable are you with recording a video to pitch your idea?
IV. How often do you receive structured feedback on your pitch, and what format works best for you?
V. Have you ever used a platform where AI evaluates your startup idea? What was that experience like?

Innovation & Accessibility
VI. Would you find it useful if your pitch was automatically translated and visible to international investors?
VII. How valuable would it be for you to observe other startup pitches and investor responses?

Platform Utility & Decision-Making
VIII. What factors influence your decision to use a new funding platform over traditional networks?
IX. What kind of support would help you improve your pitch the most — AI-driven, community-based, or expert-led?

Investment Journey & Exposure
X. How important is it for you to gain visibility among not just investors but also fellow entrepreneurs and supporters?
XI. What concerns do you have about pitching publicly — in terms of intellectual property, presentation, or judgment?

Activity 3.2

Customer journey map

Fundamental attitude: IMAGINE

What is it?

A customer journey map is a visual representation of how a user experiences something. By visualizing the customer's experience, you find out where 'highs and lows' are in the experience and what has an influence on the client and the design team. Within the design process, the customer journey is deployed in the first two phases to gain insight into how a particular problem is experienced from the user's perspective. In the third and fourth phases of the design process, a customer journey helps to imagine potential solutions for a client or can be used to test possible solutions among stakeholders. You can also use the customer journey to compare the existing situation with the desired situation and determine where improvements are possible.

How does it work?

- Determine the phases that the user goes through, before, during and after using the product or service or experiencing the problem.
- Investigate which different activities the user performs per phase and then complete the form. Set the time of purchase, use of the service or the moment the problem is experienced, somewhere in the middle.
- Trace what the user thinks and feels during each phase and activity.
- Consider whether and through which channels, the user is in contact with the organization during the different phases.
- Provide the most important insights from the user's perspective per phase, in 'highs and lows'.
- You already have ideas for possible solutions while you are in the discovery or definition phases? Don't ignore them, but write them down for later.

Phase: *Before* using product/service	Phase: *During* using product/service	Phase: *After* using product/service
Activities: What does the customer(user) do? • Explore funding options • Search for mentors or advisors • Struggle with pitch deck formats • Feel unsure about language and communication	**Activities**: What does the customer(user) do? • Submit pitch video • Receive AI-based feedback • Participate in live Q\&A/interviews • Engage in mentorship	**Activities**: What does the customer(user) do? • Join investor calls • Read community feedback • Apply feedback to improve pitch • Track progress or funding status
Thoughts and emotions: What does the customer feel and think? • Nervous and underconfident • Language anxiety • Feel lost or unsure where to begin • Hopeful but overwhelmed	**Thoughts and emotions**: What does the customer feel and think? •More confident after AI scoring • Feel encouraged by mentor feedback • Curious about live investor meetings • Grateful for multilingual access	**Thoughts and emotions**: What does the customer feel and think? • Empowered and seen • Motivated to continue • Trust in platform • Value transparency
Most important highlights from this phase: • Lack of investor network • Pitch deck preparation is costly • Language barrier exists • Founders want guidance	**Most important highlights from this phase**: • AI evaluation is seen as highly useful • Most prefer real-time mentorship • Video pitches are preferred over decks by >60% • Multilingual support appreciated	**Most important highlights from this phase**: • Real-time meetings increase credibility • Community feedback is useful • Users want more investor interaction • AI feedback helped founders rethink pitch

Based on the above highlight, summarize your solution idea in terms of the features you *now* think are most important:

- **AI evaluation of pitches**
- **Real-time mentorship**
- **Multilingual support**
- **Video pitch submission**

Activity 3.3

Point of View Statement
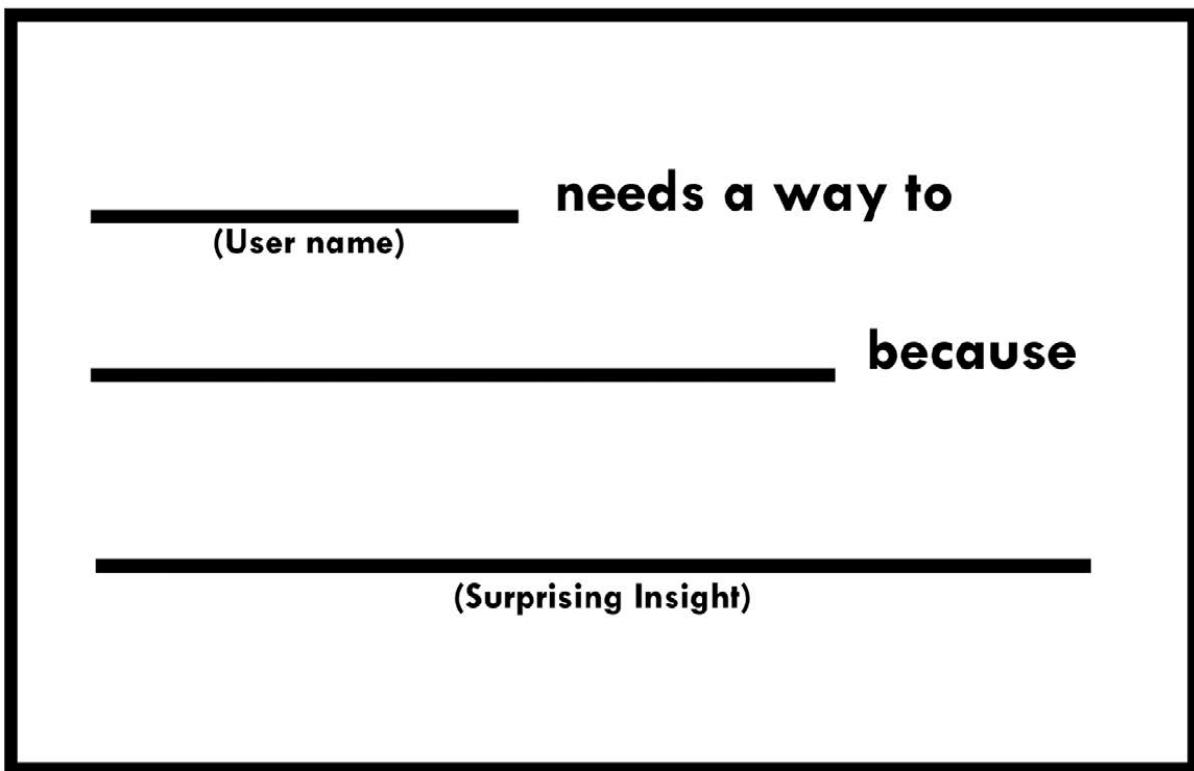
Figure 2: PoV template

A Point of View (PoV) statement serves as the blueprint for design thinking solutions; it should be open to many solution possibilities. Examples of basic and elaborated example of PoV statement:

Basic: *A busy mom needs a way to lower her utility bills because she wants to start conserving.*

Elaborated: *Sunita, a dedicated mother of three, who worries about the world her children and grandchildren will grow up in, needs a way to seamlessly integrate awareness of both waste and conservation in her daily routines because she feels shame when other moms talk about their contributions to the environment.*

Using the template given in Fig 2, develop a PoV statement for your project.

An **early-stage entrepreneur**, often overlooked due to limited networks or language barriers, needs an inclusive and accessible way **to present their startup ideas** because **traditional funding processes favor well-connected, English-speaking founders with polished pitch decks**. InvestorHunt addresses this by enabling video-based pitching evaluated through AI and community feedback, removing location and communication constraints. The entrepreneur feels uncertain, underrepresented, and excluded from the mainstream funding ecosystem. Our solution empowers them to express innovation authentically, gain visibility, and connect directly with investors, creating a more democratic, transparent, and diverse path to startup funding.