



# Design Thinking Phase 2: Observe

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# Learning Objectives.



**By the end of this module, you will:**

- 1. Be familiar with the objectives of the “Observe” design phase**
- 2. Understand how interviews are planned, conducted and documented as part of the design thinking process**
- 3. Be familiar with some additional methods used in this phase**
- 4. Have practiced conducting interviews and using some additional methods related to Observation**

# Phase 2: Observe.



Develop an empathetic understanding of people's thoughts, feelings, needs and behaviours

**Understand**



**Observe**



**Define Point  
of View**



**Ideate**



**Prototype**



**Test**

# Mindsets for the Observe phase

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- **Beginner's mindset**
- **Notice everything**
- **Build empathy**
- **Immerse in daily life**
- **Listen openly**
- **Look for problems and needs**



# Brainstorm

What are some approaches we could take to **Observe**?



# Methods for the Observe phase

- Interviews
- Shadowing
- Fly on the Wall observation
- Unobtrusive measures
- Image sorting/picture cards
- Triading
- The Love Letter and the Breakup Letter
- Methods for documenting findings
  - AEIOU
  - POEMS
  - 5 human factors



# Interviews

Open-ended interview, often a one-on-one conversation Typically conducted in the actual location/context being studied

Process:

1. Prepare an interview guide ahead of time
2. Make interviewees comfortable and build trust
3. Assign roles among team members: interviewer, note-taker, photographer (always ask permission before taking photos)
4. Write down statements in their exact words

# Interview tips

- Ask neutral, open-ended questions (avoid yes/no questions)
- Ask follow-up questions to dig deeper. This can include follow-up about unspoken information (such as nonverbal expressions). Try asking “Why?” 5 times
- Ask interviewees to recount specific stories (this is also called Directed Storytelling). For example, “Can you tell me about a time recently that you...”
- Look for inconsistencies
- At the end of the interview, summarise key points and invite the interviewee to confirm, clarify or add more detail

# Activity: Practicing interviews

Within your project teams, practice conducting interviews related to your challenge topic Preparation (5 minutes)

- Each team member should spend 5 minutes writing a list of interview questions

Interview (10 minutes)

- Within your group, select one interviewer and one interviewee to start. Interviews should take up to 10 minutes
- For each interview, assign someone to take notes and someone to capture photo and/or video footage (ask permission first!)

Debrief (5-10 minutes)

- After the interview has concluded, take 5-10 minutes to debrief as a team. Discuss the following information:
  - What are 1-2 things that the interviewer did well?
  - What is something to do differently next time?
- Repeat the exercise, selecting different team members to interview, be interviewed, take notes, and capture documentation

# Considerations - recruiting interviewees

- Stakeholder mapping
- Think about extremes and mainstreams
- Consider involving lead users
- Think about social dynamics - for example, will a woman feel comfortable discussing this topic with a man?
- Also consider languages spoken
- Can start with group interviews and identify members of the group for further one-on-one interviews

# Stakeholder mapping

- **Stakeholders** are people who are influenced by a design project or might have influence related to the challenge topic. For example:
  - Target customers
  - People who relate with target customers (parents, community members, etc)
  - Existing people involved in providing a service
  - Potential people involved in providing a service
  - Etc.
- To map stakeholders:
  - Create a broad list of stakeholders
  - Visually represent on a page, drawing out connections between them

# Shadowing

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- Follow people going through their daily life or work
- Document, through notes, pictures, etc.
- Discuss with the “subject” and obtain permission ahead of time





# “Fly on the wall” observation

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- Observe without interacting
- Look at the situation from several vantage points





# Unobtrusive measures

Make observations about human behaviour without interacting with people

Can be based on:

- Physical traces - things such as pathways worn in the grass or places where litter is thrown
- Archives - newspaper articles, receipts, sales records, etc.
- Datasets that reflect behaviours (eg, calling patterns, media watched/listened to, etc.)
- Evidence of workarounds - such as a paper sign taped to a machine to help users understand a poor interface

# Image sorting/picture cards

- Provide a set of cards with pictures to interviewees
- The cards can be used a variety of ways - interviewers can ask respondents to sort/group the cards, and/or pull out specific cards and ask respondents to talk about the topic depicted
- Cards can depict current and future product/service experiences
- Combine concrete ideas with abstract ones

# Triading

- Researcher or participant selects 6-10 related brands, products or services from a particular domain
- Ask the participant to select three examples (a triad)
- Ask the participant to explain how two of the three examples differs from the third
- Repeat a few times, asking the participant to pick additional triads and again explain how two examples differ from the third

# The love letter and the breakup letter

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- Used to understand how people feel about a product or service
- Ask respondents to write (or dictate) a “love letter” to a product/service they love
- Or - ask them to write or dictate a “breakup letter” to a product or service that they no longer use

# Approaches for documenting findings

## AEIOU

**Activity** - What is happening? What are people doing?

**Environment** - What is the nature and function of the space?

**Interaction** - How do systems interact with one another? How do users interact with one another?

**Objects** - what objects/devices are used?

**User** - Who are users? What role do they play? How are they influenced?

## What? How? Why?

**What** are people doing?

**How** are they doing it?

**Why** are they doing it?

## POEMS

People

Objects

Environments

Messages

Services

## 5 Human Factors

Physical

Cognitive

Social

Cultural

Emotional

# Key Learning Points

- During the Observe phase, we work to develop an empathetic understanding of people's thoughts, feelings, needs and behaviours
- We can be most effective if we adopt a mindset that is focused on listening, building empathy, questioning and being keen observers
- There are several different methods that we can use in this phase, including interviews, fly-on-the-wall observations, or structured activities like triading and using picture cards
- Documentation is very important in order to organise the information we capture and use it to communicate
- We can use frameworks like AEIOU, POEMS and Five Human Factors to observe and document a range of activities



# QUESTIONS?

You have the floor...





# THANK YOU!

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