Teacher Overview

The Subscription Box Design Project is a fast-paced project leading students through the design thinking process. This project supports the same mindset, thinking and outcomes as The Extraordinaire's project in less time (without needing The Extraordinaires Design Studio). Students pair up, show and tell each other about their boxes, ideate, and make a new solution that is "useful and meaningful" to their partner. This activity leads students through a rapid, full-cycle of the design thinking process. The project is broken down into specific steps with a worksheet packet that is easy for the facilitator to guide students through the process. Participants get the feel for a user-centered design approach, develop shared vocabulary, and get a quick taste of each design step. This project helps students see the value of engaging with real people (customer) to help them ground their design decisions, the value of taking an iterative approach, while experiencing a bias towards action, as the project is fast paced with a limited amount of time.

This project was submitted to us by YE educator, Kasey Winegar.

When to Use This Lesson

The Subscription Box Design Thinking Project can be used at anytime throughout your YE program. Students do not require any prior knowledge to be successful at design thinking. You can repeat this project as many time as you like throughout your program.

Time

60 MIN

BEFORE CLASS PREPARATION

> Review the entire activity guide.
> Acquire all required materials.
> Arrange room to accommodate groups of 4 students

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

> Be Principled
> Knowledge
> Opportunity

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

> PE LO 1.a, 3.a, 3.e
> Innovation LO 1.a, 1.c

KEY TERMS

> Empathy
> Prototype
> Iterate
> Innovation

MATERIALS

> The Subscription Box Design Packet
> Colored Pencils

ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

> The False Start – Do this before step 1.
> Tell students to "Design the IDEAL subscription box." (The product can be easily changed to meet the needs of your students.)
  - This step is called the "false start", but don't tell the students it is a false-start. You don't want them to talk to their partner (customer) at this point, just dive right into developing a product for them. The intention is to contrast an abstract problem-centered approach to a human-centered design thinking approach, which they will experience during the rest of the project. Don't play music during this session to accentuate the difference. It is ok to let students feel a little rushed and some discomfort at this point. It is also natural at this point for some students to feel stuck and delay putting anything down on paper. This is a part of the lesson, so I would encourage you to stick to your timeline.
> When time is up (3 minutes) ask them the following questions and briefly discuss what happened during this session.
  - How did that round feel?
  - How could we improve the process? You might even get them to say that they need to talk to the user (customer) in order to meet their needs.
  - Did anyone attempt to get feedback from their partner (customer)?
  - Explain that this round was a typical problem-solving approach, taking a given problem, working using your own opinions and experiences to guide you, and with a solution in mind to be designed.
  - Now tell them they are going to try a different approach, a human-centered design thinking approach.
  - If you have not covered Design Thinking Process this may be a good time to give them some background knowledge on the process, or you may choose to let them experience it first and discuss Design Thinking on the backend.
> **Protip:** Playing background music is a great way to set the creative atmosphere and signal the starting time and ending time of each session.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

> **Step 1** – Interview – Have students decide which partner is student A and which is student B. Have student "A" interview student "B" for 4 minutes. The goal is to acquire as much knowledge as possible about "B's" subscription box wants, needs, requirements, product use(s), specifications, preferences etc. The most important part of designing for someone is to gain "empathy" for that person. Then have students switch roles and repeat interview.
> **Step 2** – Dig Deeper – Have students repeat the process with student "A" getting 3 minutes to question student "B". Give students a "pep talk" about digging deeper and really looking for ways to make the subscription box user experience "special" for the customer. (Yes, think outside the box.) Interviewers should try to dig for feelings and stories about the users experiences. Forget about the box, try to find out what makes your customer feel "fist pumping happy", what is important to them. Then have students switch roles and repeat the second interview.
> **Step 3** – Capture Findings – In this step both partners will take 3 minutes to summarize their findings, by writing down how they perceive their customers "goals and wishes" and "insights" into their partners expectations. Does the designer see something about their partners (customers) experience that maybe they don't? Think about your partners physical and emotional needs.

> **Step 4** – Take a stand with a point-of-view – In this step both partners will be given 3 minutes to write a point-of-view statement summarizing their customers need(s). Specifically, state: what is the meaningful challenge (problem) you are taking on and solving for your customer? It should feel like a problem(s) worth tackling, things that really make your customer so happy they will tell everyone.

> **Step 5** – Sketch at least 5 radical ways to meet your user's needs. – In this step have students write their problem statement, then be given 5 minutes to sketch 5 different solutions to their problem, or 5 different ways to satisfy their customer with their subscription box design. Be sure to have students quickly label any key features or benefits illustrated by their sketches. This step is about volume and ideas, not about evaluating the idea(s), that comes later. Encourage wild ideas in this step. You may want to remind them they are not just designing a subscription box; they are solving a problem and/or meeting the unique needs of their customer.

> **Step 6** – Share your solutions & capture feedback. – Now it is time for students to share their ideas with their partner. Partner "A" will share their ideas with Partner "B" for 5 minutes and seek feedback from "B", then switch and partner "B" will get 5 minutes. Both partners should be sure to take notes on their partner's likes/dislikes and build on their ideas, as well as look for new insights. Be sure to tell students this step is not just about validating their ideas, but about listening to capture their partner's feelings and reactions to their ideas. They should fight the urge to defend their ideas.

ITERATING BASED ON FEEDBACK

> **Step 7** – Reflect & generate a new solution. Students should now reflect on what they have learned both about their partner and their solutions. From this new understanding have students sketch a new idea in 3 minutes. (Students will typically moan about the 3 minutes, but this should be a quick rough draft, focused on their key ideas. Tell them this solution may be a variation on previous ideas or may be something completely new. Although they don't have much time in this step, they will need to use their time wisely and include as much detail and color as possible.

> **Step 8** – Build your solution. – This is their "final draft". Students will have 7 minutes to sketch of their prototype. Remind them that they are trying to illustrate the subscription box in such a way as to pique the interest of their customer.

> **Step 9** – Share your solution and get feedback. – In this step give partner "A" 4 minutes to share their solution and gather feedback from "B", the switch and "B" will be given 4 minutes. Remind students their prototype (sketch) is not "valuable", but the feedback and new insights are. Design is always about the user! Students should be sure to record, "what worked", "what could be improved", "questions their partner has", and "new ideas".

ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

> Ask, "Who had a partner who created something you really like"? Why did you like it?
> Ask the designer, "How did talking to your partner inform your design"?
> Ask the designer, "How did testing and getting feedback inform your design"?
> Ask the group, "What was the most challenging part of the process"? (Some may say the time given. Did the short time frame prevent them from generating quality ideas or just from making a better drawing?
> Ask the group, "Can we draw any correlations between the design thinking process and the Foundational Value?"
> Some of the core ideas you want to draw out in your debrief discussion are:

> Human-centered design – empathy for the person or people you are designing for, and feedback from user, is fundamental to good design.
> Show don't tell – Creating experiences, using visual illustrations, communicating your vision or ideas in a way that is meaningful to the customer is valuable.
> Experimenting and prototyping – this is not simply to validate your idea(s), but to integral to building, thinking and learning so we can for mutually long-term benefit.
> The power of iteration – we went through this exercise at a fast pace so students can experience an entire design cycle quickly. By going through the challenge of interviewing twice, sketching twice, and getting feedback or testing with your partner twice, we reach better outcomes. Iterating solutions or having a growth-mindset, is key for business to sustain long-term success.

For more on how to debrief, see the "Design Thinking Process" handout for some possible Foundational Values connections.

NOTES