Thinking by Design

FOUNDATION PHASE

The world we interact with is the result of intentional or unintentional "designs" that support or inhibit the way we life and work every day. The *Thinking by Design* course empowers students to identify these designs and to become active designers who can intentionally change the world around them. This course will push students to connect with their community, identify problems that impact real people, and design meaningful solutions that address these issues.

Topics and Themes

Thinking by Design takes the student through every step of design thinking, first as self-reflection, then as a member of a team, and finally as a designer addressing real community problems. The major topics covered by the course are centered on design thinking principles, and enable students to build an awareness of others and their community.

- **Empathize** What problems do others face? How can design support the well-being of others? What can I learn from other experts or designers?

- **Define** What are the needs of others? What specific needs am I trying to solve?

- **Ideate** What is the most ideal solution to a given problem? Am I addressing the entire problem or missing certain aspects that are meaningful to others?

- **Prototype** How can I bring my ideas to life? What will my design look like? How will end users interact with my design?

- **Test** What feedback do end users have about my design? How can it be improved to be the best possible solution?

- **Business Model** How can I bring my design solution to the community? How do I consider stakeholders, resources, and users in a way that would make my design a viable solution for the community? What feedback would experts in this space have?

The course concludes with students considering how to bring their design to life through various business exercises and a final presentation. The culmination of experiences and the final project are meant to break down the barriers between students and business leaders from their community, and empower students to lead the change they envision.

Essential Skills

Problem Solving Understand how to identify a problem, collect information, generate alternatives, evaluate ideas, and implement a solution.

Creativity View things in new ways and from different perspectives to generate new solutions that are meaningful, unique, and valuable.

Self-awareness Reflect, evaluate, and develop an understanding of one's own behaviors, strengths, weaknesses, interests, ideas, and motivations.

Teamwork Bring together the unique combination of knowledge, skills and abilities found across a group versus an individual. Understanding how to collaborate and compromise as a team member to create a solution that addresses the problem from various perspectives.

Empathy Cultivate a deep understanding of how others perceive the world, face unique challenges, and how they feel about those challenges.

Networking Form social and business relationships that create opportunities to better understand the community, acquire expert knowledge, and gather valuable feedback.
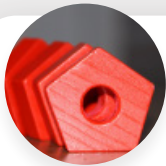
Project Management and Planning See a project through from start to finish: initiate work, manage time, delegate tasks, resolve issues, and execute the vision with a final product.

Reading, Writing, Thinking

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Featured Quests

Thinking by Design consists of approximately 45 quests, spread over 14 levels.

Design in Every Day

How can you tune into design thinking by looking at designs in your everyday life?

2 Activities

0 Artifacts

design thinking, listen, redesign, prototype

Ethics and Testing

How do the concepts of ethics and testing contribute to the design process?

5 Activities

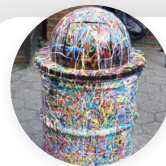0 Artifacts

design thinking, learning, testing, ethics

Interview for Insights

How can you leverage empathy, effective interviews and deliberate listening to improve design?

4 Activities

1 Artifact

empathy, interviews

Thinking Twice is Nice

Can you apply your design skills to reimagine the use for trash?

2 Activities

1 Artifact

creativity, design thinking

Community Problems

How can we utilize the steps of design thinking to identify a community problem?

4 Activities

1 Artifact

community, teamwork, teams, team, problems

Quest Forward Learning (formerly called Next Generation Learning, or NGL) is designed to support personalized, active learning in high schools and colleges worldwide. We enable relevant, engaged learning that activates learners and helps them build real skills, using innovative materials aligned to local and national standards.

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