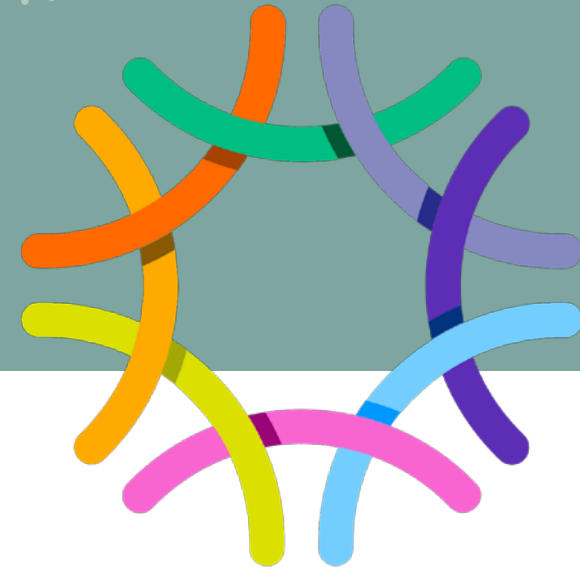


Serving our Communities Creatively by Thinking like a Designer

Dr. Audrey Barbakoff, EdD, MLIS
CEO, Co/Lab Capacity

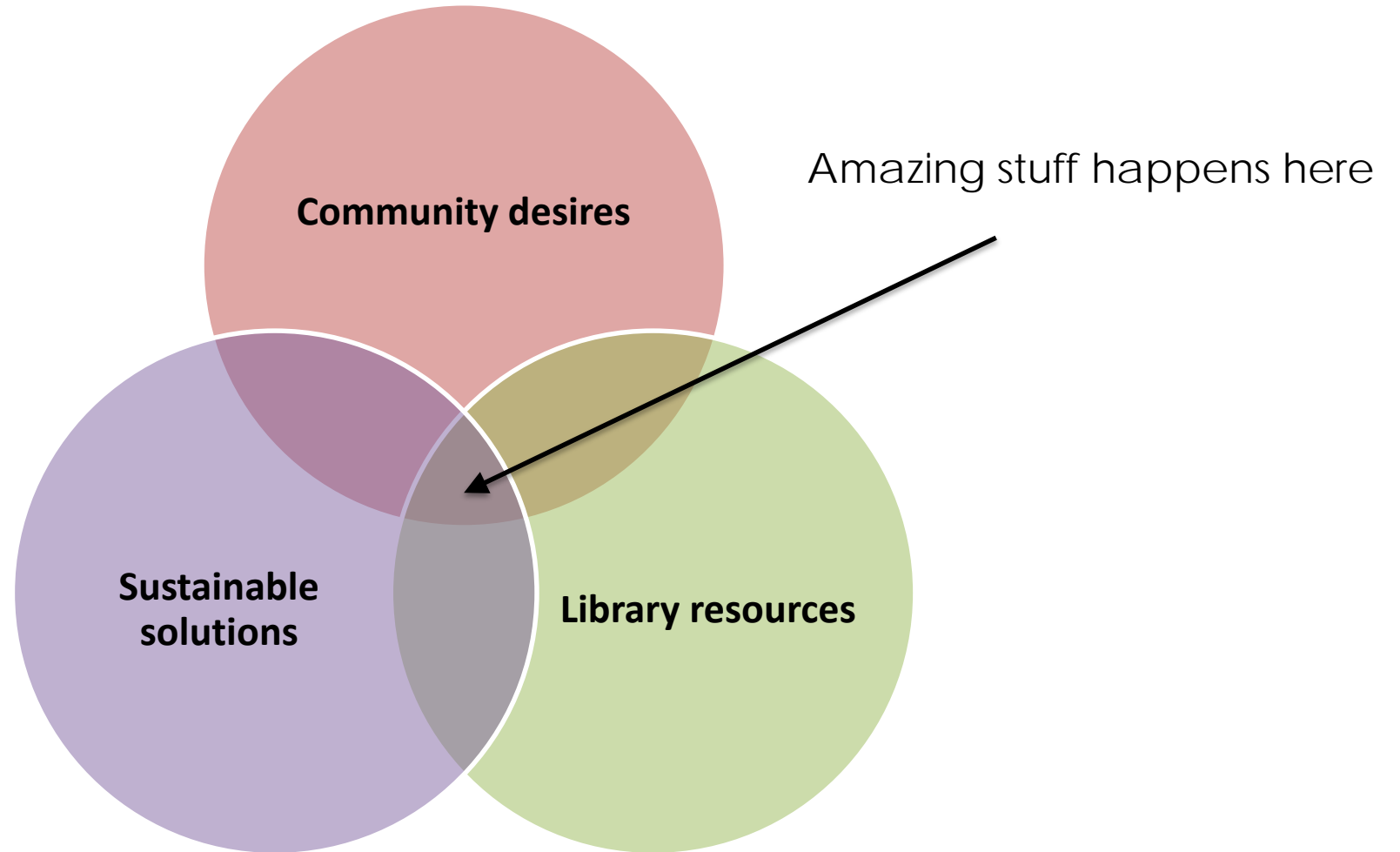
Southeastern Annual Meeting
June 2023



co/lab capacity

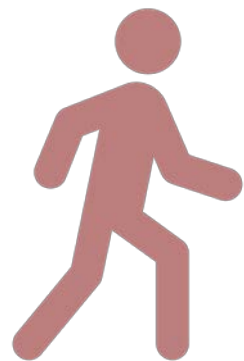
**Want to serve your community?
Try thinking like a designer.**

Why design thinking?





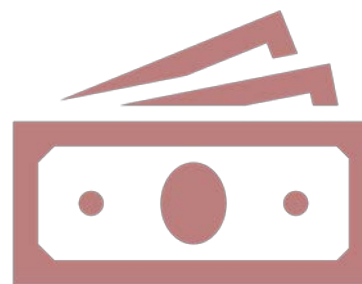
Why design thinking in libraries?



Act quickly but thoughtfully



Respond meaningfully to community

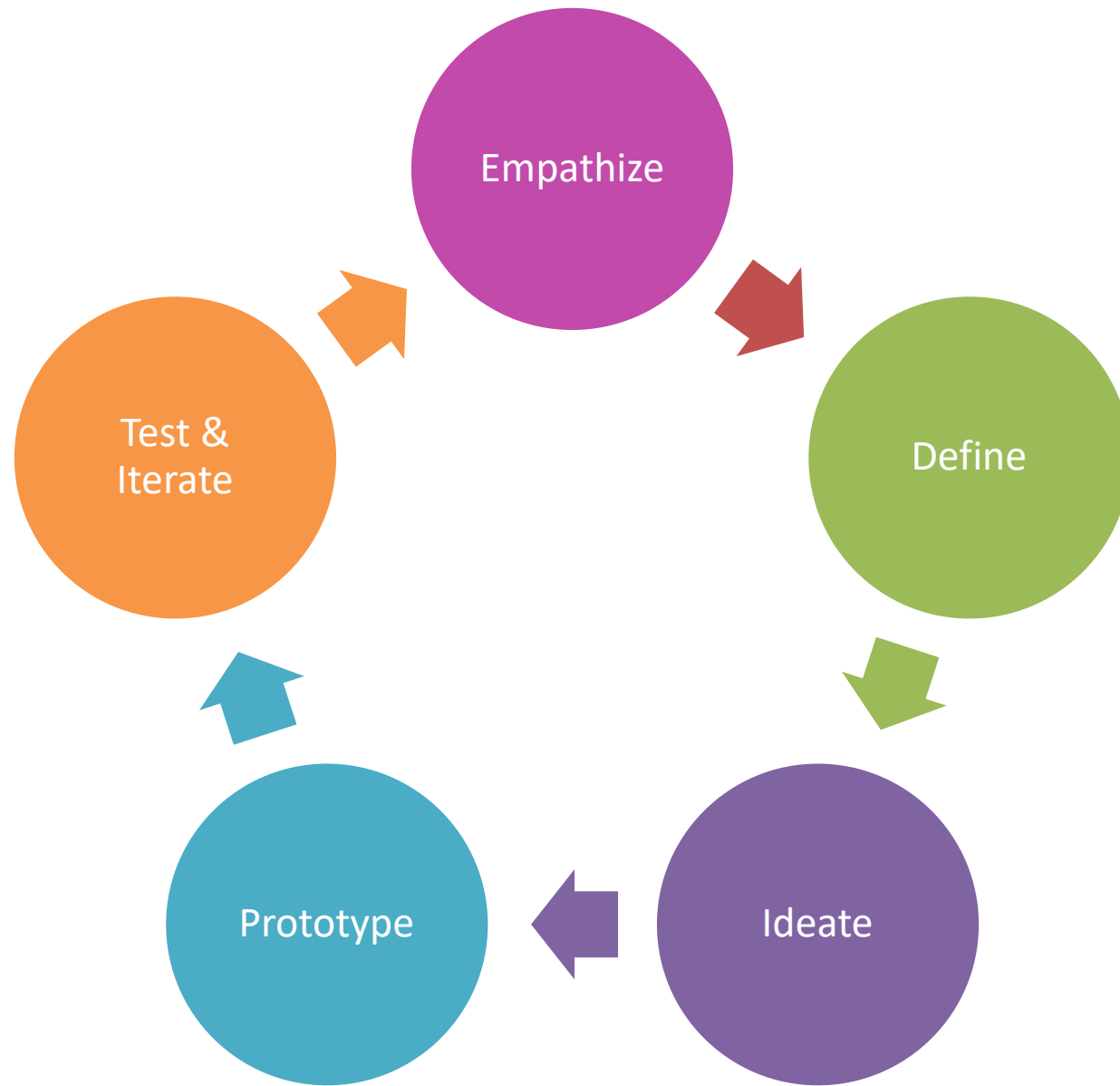


Use resources effectively; be able to scale and adapt



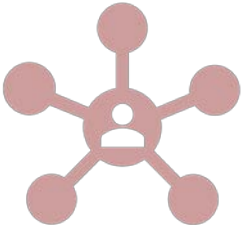
Live your values: DEI, lifelong learning

What is design thinking?





Principles of design thinking



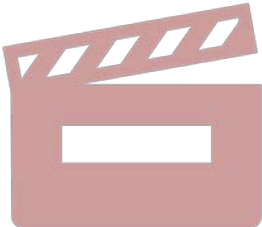
Human (and user) centered



Collaborative



Beginner's mind



Learning by doing



Equity



Real-World Context

- What about the design thinking approach resonates most with you?
- What aligns well with what you already do?
- What ideas are new, surprising, or challenging?





Inspiration: Empathize

- Who are your desired users or audience? Who is most excluded from library services now?
- How can you learn about their goals, strengths, and the barriers they face?
 - One-on-ones
 - Group conversations
 - Being where people are
 - Personas (use with care)





Building authentic, strengths-based relationships with excluded communities

- Start with relationships and respect.
- What are their goals?
- What are their strengths and gifts?
- What resources can the library contribute to their efforts?
- Share power.
- Commit to sustaining the relationship.





Inspiration: Define

What is a meaningful goal or outcome for your user?

- Maybe not what you thought it would be in the beginning!
- What is the root problem you are trying to solve? The opportunity you are trying to build on?
- "How might we"?





Inspiration Practice

HOW MIGHT WE make this the most awesome Southeastern conference ever?

Most impacted audience: All of you!

Empathize: Quickly interview the person sitting next to you.

- What are they most hoping to get out of today?
- What does an amazing conference experience mean to them? How does it look or feel? What would make the difference between being satisfied and being amazed?





Ideation

- Gather lots of ideas, quickly.
- Weird and wild are welcome!
- From as diverse a pool as possible
- Create psychological safety with “Yes, and ...”
- Individual and group approaches
 - Brainwriting, brainstorming
 - Sketching, drawing, collage





Ideation: Practice

Brainstorm with your partner. Based on what they said an amazing conference experience meant to them, come up with 3 ideas for how to make this the best SENYRC conference ever.

Go fast!

A large, empty square box with a blue outline, intended for writing the first idea.

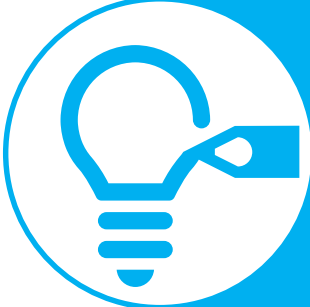
Idea 1

A large, empty square box with a blue outline, intended for writing the second idea.

Idea 2

A large, empty square box with a blue outline, intended for writing the third idea.

Idea 3





Iteration: Prototype & Test

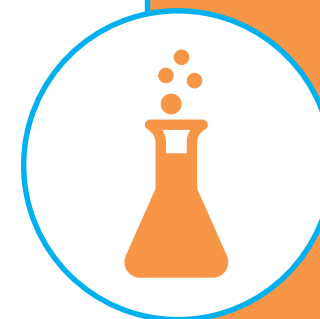
- **Discuss with your users and colleagues: what idea will you explore first?**
- **Create a prototype.**
 - A single instance of a program, as basic as possible
 - A Lego model of a space
 - A layout of a web page done in post-its
 - A journey map, describing a process
- **Pilot it with your users – and learn from the experience.**
 - Have an evaluation plan. Feedback meetings or conversations, user surveys, observation?
 - What worked? What didn't? What might change? What should be added or removed?





It's Circular, not Linear

- Ask yourself: What did you learn about ...
 - Your users? (empathy)
 - The problem, opportunity, or question? (define)
 - The solution you created? (prototype & test)
- Based on what you learned: how might you change your program / service / process / space for next time?
- Make changes, try it again, and keep going and growing!





Iteration: Practice

- Pick 1 idea from your ideation sheet (or a remix) to make this the most amazing conference ever for your colleague.
- Flesh it out – sketch, storyboard, flow chart, outline, etc.



Draw out one idea in more detail

- Turn back to your partner and get their feedback. What works and what doesn't? What would make it better? Now go to someone new and get their feedback!
- Revise your idea based on the feedback. Share what you came up with!



Great, but, uh ...

How exactly do I use this in a library?



Let's design a ... program

Empathize

- Who is excluded from programs now?
- Reflect on your biases and history
- Talk to them!

Define

- What is a goal they want to achieve that the library can impact through programming? How might we ?

Ideate

- Meet to generate, share, and discuss ideas for a program.

Prototype

- Plan a simple version of the program to pilot once.

Test & Iterate

- Get feedback on the first program
- Make changes and improve, expand
- Keep learning and iterating!





Let's design a ... space

Empathize

- Public or staff forum for input
- Survey (not on its own)
- Reach out to systematically excluded groups

Define

- How might we create a space that supports people in [a specific goal/desire of the community?]

Ideate

- Take a floorplan and sketch on it
- Draw pictures of people using the space
- Flow chart of the journey people will take in the space

Prototype

- Make a model from Legos, cardboard, or paper
- Tape out new furniture arrangement on the floor

Test & Iterate

- Let end users play with and give feedback on the model
- A/B test with multiple options
- Observe users pretending to do their tasks in the taped-out layout





Let's design a ... workflow

Empathize

- Who is most impacted by the process now? On staff? In the public?
- Visit staff meetings, talk with frequent users

Define

- What is the goal of the process? How might we design a workflow that efficiently meets that goal?

Ideate

- Establish psychological safety for participants
- Make space for individual ideas to avoid groupthink and address power dynamics

Prototype

- Flow chart of new work process

Test & Iterate

- Expand the program
- Keep learning and iterating!



How will you use design thinking in YOUR library?



Apply it: Inspiration

1. Who are your desired users or audience? Who is most excluded from library services now? Pick one to focus on.
2. How will you learn about their goals, strengths, and the barriers they face?
3. Imagine you just had that conversation. What do you think an important goal, problem, or opportunity might be for them?
Frame it as a “how might we?” question.

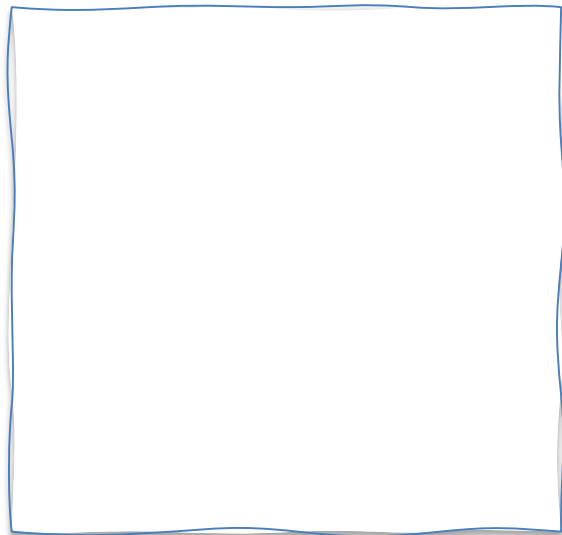




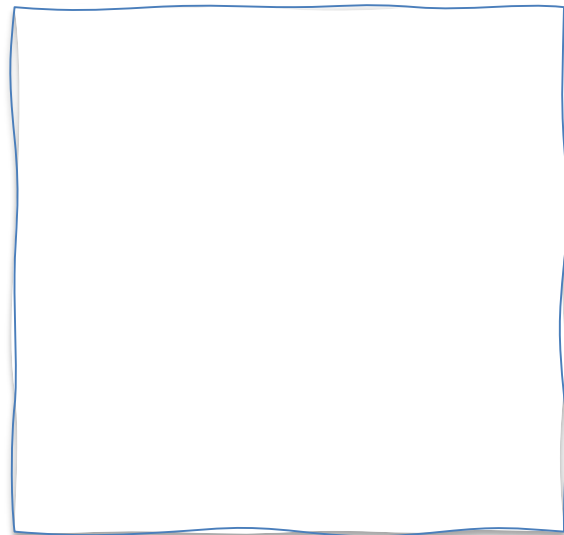
Apply it: Ideation

Think about the community you want to serve and one of their goals or dreams. Draw 3 ideas for a library service, program, or process that might help achieve the goal.

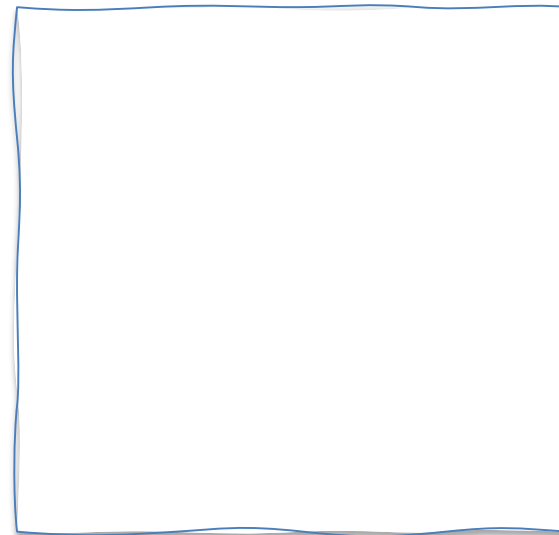
You have 1 minute!



Idea 1



Idea 2



Idea 3





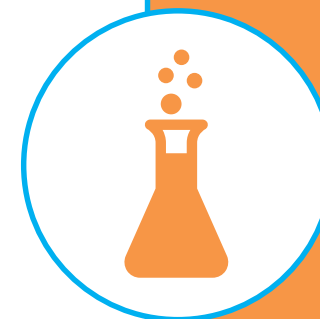
Apply it: Iteration

- Pick 1 idea from your ideation sheet (or a remix)
- Flesh it out – sketch, storyboard, flow chart, outline, etc.



Draw out one idea in more detail

- How will test the idea with your users? How will you learn about their experiences? (Imagine you asked them!)
- Be ready to re-define, re-design, and test again based on what you hear.



Further Reading

IDEO. [*Design thinking for libraries.*](#)

Stanford. [*Design thinking = Method, not magic \[webinar\].*](#)

Stanford d.school. [*Starter kit.*](#)

Tombolo Institute at Bellevue College. [*Why design thinking?*](#)

Creative Reaction Lab. [*Equity-centered community design field guide.*](#)

Co/Lab Capacity Community Engagement newsletter: www.colabcapacity.com



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