What is Design Thinking?

At its core, design thinking is a human-centered process during which designers examine all aspects of an issue and engage in a series of divergent and convergent thinking to arrive at novel and relevant courses of action. These deceptively simple 5 stages contain a wide variety of nuance and application for challenges of every scale and within every industry. Professionals across the globe use design to create and make choices about the future of their company, their products, their impact, and their lives.

How does St Vrain use design?

Schools throughout St Vrain realize the power of design thinking for use across conference rooms and classrooms. As pictured above, we employ Stanford d.school's model of design thinking, which provides students and educators alike a framework and mindset for approaching challenges and opportunities. Design has influenced our professional development, student projects, instruction, and strategic priorities. Read through the descriptions for just one example of how we might walk through this process as educators.

IMMERSE, OBSERVE, ENGAGE. SEEK INSIGHTS INTO THE USER EXPERIENCE.

By analyzing data gathered through leadership meetings, survey data, and informal conversations, a school realizes the limited role of student voice in its culture.

IDENTIFY USER NEEDS IN ORDER TO DEFINE THE CHALLENGE. HOW MIGHT WE...

Students need a way to exercise their opinions and agency throughout the school day in order to see themselves living the mission and vision of the school environment.

GO FOR VOLUME. DEVELOP MYRIAD NEXT STEPS. CREATE OPTIONS.

Ideas for this will be as varied as the designers participating. Students could provide feedback after every lesson on sticky notes with what they found valuable and what didn't work for them. Periodic student 'ignite-style' talks. Students take over leadership team meetings, etc.

BUILD TO DECIDE. SHOW INSTEAD OF TELL. DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF IDEAS.

Design team decides to invite students to different PD sessions throughout the year to provide feedback to teachers while they are planning lessons and instruction. Students develop voice, agency, and metacognitive skills by helping to shape the learning experience.

GATHER FEEDBACK AND DATA TO ITERATE AND IMPROVE PROTOTYPES.

Through survey data and ongoing conversations, teachers discover the rise in student investment in classrooms / lessons where they have instructional decision-making opportunities.

EMPATHIZE

DEFINE

IDEATE

PROTOTYPE

TEST