Design Thinking Concept Map

“Design thinking is love in action.” — Viola Allo

For the core idea of my concept map, I have chosen “love” or loving-kindness. Using the above quote, I anchor my map in the notion that love grounds our work as students or practitioners of the design thinking process. I know this might sound overly sentimental, but I made this choice because I view love as something that begins with thoughts/ideas and earnest attempts at understanding others, and in time, it becomes something collaborative and linked to specific actions that create joy or positive change for those we seek to be of service to.

As we journeyed through the material for the course, I could see love reflected in the various steps of the design thinking process that we explored. We begin with empathy, as we seek to understand the user; this is an act of loving-kindness, as we show consideration for their perspectives and experiences. We identify the challenges the user faces and ask “how” we can change or improve things for the user—and perhaps for ourselves, too, since we might be the users. We take time to brainstorm, to explore as many ideas and possibilities for how to approach the problem and find solutions. This, too, is an act of loving-kindness. We transform our love into actions, as we follow the design thinking process, and create solutions/prototypes that we can test in the real world. We evaluate what we create and see where more changes and improvements are needed. The outcome is not only a solution that works but a satisfied user who is able to enjoy a positive experience. We create the possibility of joy, and this is love. Design thinking is love in action. Ideas and actions create change, change made possible through collaboration. Design thinking is people collaborating for positive change.

I have placed the stages of the design thinking process as the bulk of the body of my concept map, with bullet points next to each stage and extra bullet points off to the right, for more key ideas and things to keep in mind for each stage. I seal off my concept map with larger related concepts that either contribute to design thinking (e.g. ADDIE, at the top of my map) or that can draw inspiration from the design thinking process (e.g. service design and user experience in libraries, included on the left and bottom of my map, respectively), as well as with an inclusion of the design thinking toolkits that we consulted for our course (e.g. Design Thinking Toolkit for Libraries, on the right of my concept map). We create relationships with others (Bell, 2009), through collaboration and service in libraries, and this is love by design.

References and Resources


Service design is loving kindness by design.

Create personas. Engage users even more for service design. Participatory practice. Inclusion. Relevance.

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—Viola Allo

Empathic Research
- Human-centered
- User perspective
- Ethnography
- Observation
- Listening
- Empathy

Identify the Problem
- Information gathering
- Analysis & synthesis
- Problem-finding
- User perspective
- Pain points

Brainstorm
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- IDEO Deep Dive
- Inclusion of all ideas
- IDEO brainstorm rules

Prototype
- Collaboration
- Possible solutions
- Iterative process
- Creativity & innovation
- Seeing which ideas work

Implement
- Put solutions into practice
- Test in the real world
- Best prototypes are tangible solutions implemented in relevant settings

Evaluate
- Was the problem solved?
- Formative evaluation
- Summative evaluation
- Quantifying success
- User experience
- Assessment

ADDIE – Analysis | Design | Develop | Implement | Evaluate
Inspiration – Ideation – Iteration

Design thinking process helps us create a positive user experience at the library.
User Experience—Usability—Touchpoints—Totality—Service Principles
Key: Problem recovery is priority and fixing whatever is broken.
“From Gatekeepers to Gate-Openers” by S. Bell (2009)