DESIGN THINKING @ THE NUEVA SCHOOL

By asking What do we need next? and using the stages on this chart, design thinkers craft a unique process for each particular project. As students become more mindful of the process they have used on previous projects, they build confidence in their ability to successfully navigate open-ended challenges.

What Next

Collaborate

Monitor Team Dynamics (SEL)

Building upon Nueva's long history in teaching Social Emotional Learning (SEL), we have made team check-ins an explicit aspect of our Design Thinking process. Students have the opportunity to verbalize their concerns and brainstorm solutions collectively.

Motivate & Inspire

Monitoring the motivation of a team and learning how to inspire a team are important qualities of an effective design thinker. If the various stages of the Design Thinking process are visited without an inherent enthusiasm or heightened motivation, the results are likely to be less than innovative. We help build the leadership skills and initiative of our students through out emphasis on this step.

Project Management

Using classic techniques of project planning and time management, students practice how to monitor their progress and meet deadlines.

Research/ "Deep Dive"

Observe

Through observation, much can be learned. Often people will say one thing, but when a keen observer looks, they will find that actually the behavior is different.

Ask & Listen

Active listening and curiosity are practiced and enhanced as a critical skill of Design Thinking. Through direct lessons and extensive practice, students become proficient interviewers who recognize the power of beginning questions with the word, "Why".

Research

Identifying experts, locating extreme users, and performing on-line research are all key aspects of the Design Thinking process. Students use this stage to understand and learn new information as well as to answer questions or locate resources throughout the process.

Focus

Develop Empathy & "Look Beneath the Surface"

After collecting information, students then strive to infer the underlying thoughts and feelings of a user. By immersing themselves in the experiences of users and developing "deep empathy," they are able to develop a deeper understanding that can lead to key insights.

Synthesize & Define

Many design challenges are complex and multi-faceted. Grappling with them can be daunting and cause some people to give up hope of solving them. By focusing on particular user types and their needs, along with the insights gathered during the "Deep Dive," students define an area that it is large enough to allow for innovation, yet bounded enough to allow for success. Solving even a small part of a large issue is worthy of effort. We foster an attitude of optimism that is supported by the tools of the Design Thinking process.

Generate Ideas

Brainstorm

Brainstorming is a set of skills as well as a mindset. By adhering to a few Brainstorming Rules, teams and individuals learn to "turn off their judging brains" in order to increase the fluency of their ideas. At Nueva, we encourage students to use "Sketch Brainstorming" to allow them to rapidly capture their ideas.

Make Informed Decisions

Analyze & Choose

Students benefit from exposure to different methods of analyzing and making decisions. Beginning with simple pros and cons and moving to weighted ratings of various criteria, students will build a repertoire of techniques to use in the future.

Prototyping Cycle

The Prototype and Feedback stages are linked together in an iterative cycle that is done many times to converge on a better solution.

Create Prototypes

The Design Thinking process embodies a "bias towards action." By making representations of ideas, problems can be identified and resolved early in the design cycle. Tangible objects or simulated experiences allow students to obtain more informed feedback from users before committing the time and resources to a final version.

Incorporate Feedback

Students evaluate all of the feedback they have obtained about their prototypes. Combining this information with additional research and brainstorming, they decide how best to proceed. *Should we change our prototype? Have we answered the key questions? Do we need more information? Do we need more ideas? Should we scrap this and start over?*

Seek Feedback

Soliciting feedback from users is a key aspect of the Design Thinking process. There are many factors that go into a person's response to an item or an experience. Designers bring an open mind and a beginner's mindset of "not knowing" in order to gather both positive and negative feedback to improve their solutions. Experimentation as well as failures are valued for their information and because they contribute to future successes.