



Design Thinking ABC

Essi Kuure

Welcome!

- Let's start by saying hello.
- Nice to meet you is in Finnish "Mukava tavata!".
- How is it in your language/dialect? Could one person from each country/region write it to chat and tell how it is pronounced?
- **We are from:**
 - Finland – Kiva nähärä
 - Ireland - Deas bualadh leat
 - Poland - Miło mi cię poznać
 - Portugal - Prazer em conhecer-te
 - Slovenia – Me veseli





Essi Kuure

Lead Service Designer, Entrepreneur

- ✓ Co-creation specialist with extensive experience in service design training and coaching
- ✓ Educational background: Industrial Designer (MA) and Doctor of Arts (PhD)
- ✓ Joined the Palo service design team in August 2022; became entrepreneur and co-owner in May 2024
- ✓ Over 10 years of experience at the University of Lapland in service design research, projects, and teaching
- ✓ Focuses on collaborative service development, especially in complex contexts

I'd be happy to connect with you on LinkedIn:

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Today's program

1. Start and welcome (14 EET/13 CET)
2. Introduction to key terms
Short Break
3. Mindset level: Design thinking principles
4. Process level: Doing service design
 - EmpathizeShort Break
 - Define
 - Ideate
5. Conclusions
6. Next steps



First thoughts

*What is your first thought about
DESIGN THINKING?*

Please write your answer to chat.

You said:

#brainstorming

#co-creating

#takingcustomerstothe development

#creatingorimproving

#problemsolving

#participativewayoffindingsolutions

#developingideas



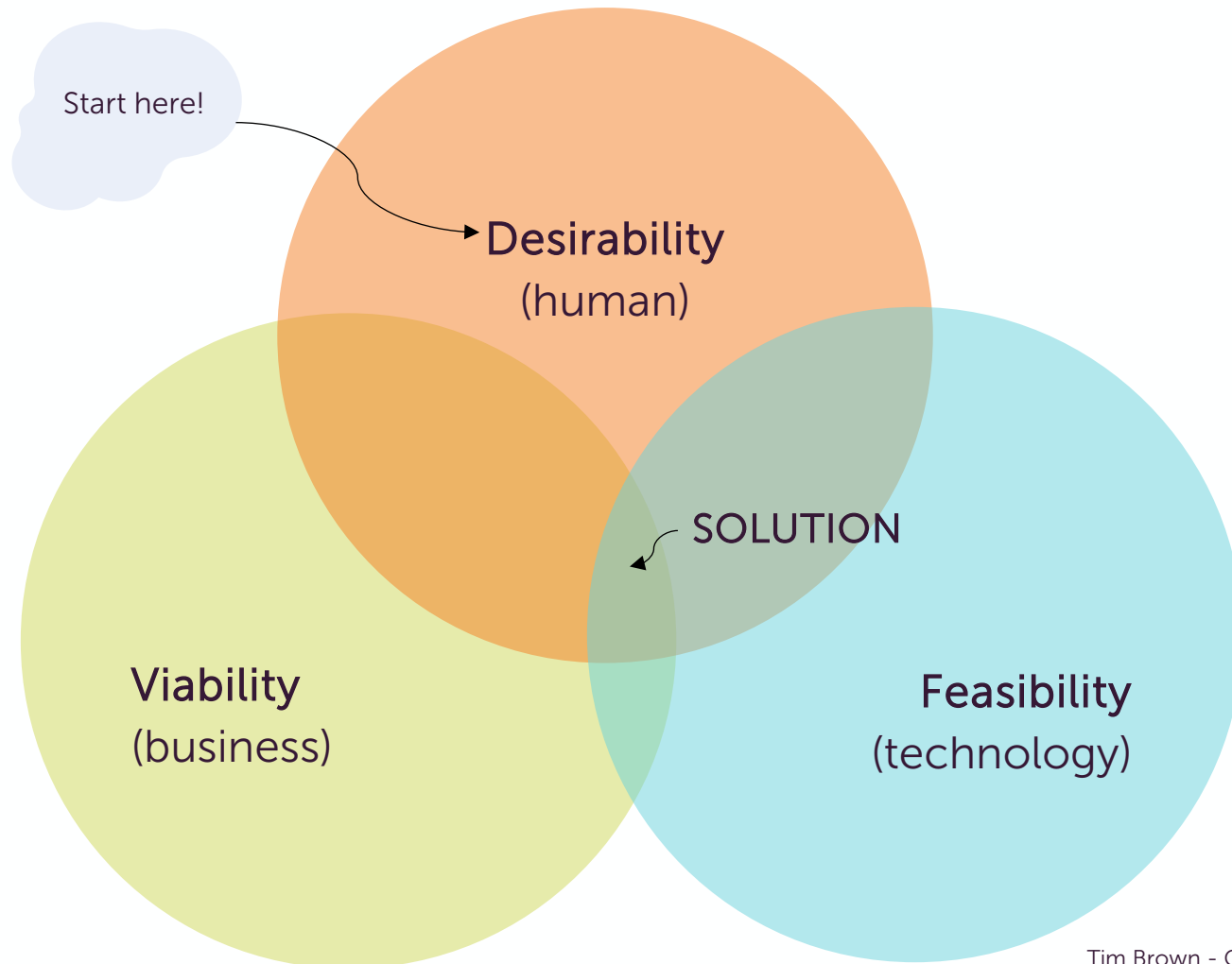
| Introduction to key terms

“Design thinking is a **human-centered** approach to innovation that draws from the **designer’s** toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.”

Tim Brown, Executive Chair of IDEO



Human-centered Approach of Design Thinking



Where would
you start?

Key terms for your design approach

Human-centered design (HCD)
is the mindset



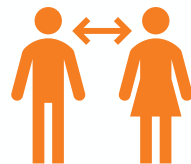
HCD starts with understanding people's needs, emotions, and behaviors. It's about **designing *with* people, not just *for* them.**

Design thinking is
the process



Structured process that brings HCD mindset to life. It includes stages like empathizing, defining the problem, ideating, prototyping, and testing — all aimed at generating solutions that are not only creative but also grounded in real human needs.

Service design is the
application to services
and experiences



How the principles are applied to services — the often-invisible systems and interactions that shape how people experience everything. It focuses on the *entire user journey*, both front stage (what customers see and feel) and backstage (the systems and teams that deliver the service).

Thinking about human



| Mindset Level: Design Thinking Principles

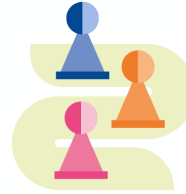
Principles of Service Design Thinking

HUMAN-CENTERED



Focus on the experiences and needs of all individuals affected by the service, including users, employees, and other stakeholders.

SEQUENTIAL



Visualize and organize the service as a sequence of interrelated actions, ensuring a coherent flow of experiences over time.

COLLABORATIVE



Engage stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and functions throughout the design process to foster shared understanding and co-creation.

REAL



Ground the design process in real-world contexts by researching actual needs, prototyping tangible solutions, and making intangible aspects of the service visible.

ITERATIVE



Adopt an exploratory and adaptive approach, continuously refining the service through cycles of prototyping, testing, and feedback.

HOLISTIC



Consider the service in its entirety, addressing the needs of all stakeholders across the full spectrum of interactions and touchpoints.

Source: This is Service Design Doing

www.palvelumuotoilupalo.fi

PALVELUMUOTOILU
PALO

Your own service experience

5 min



What recent service experience do you remember or comes to your mind? When was the last time you were pleasantly surprised by a service? What was the service and what made it stand out?

You said:

- Podiatrist service
- Orientation day or open day at school
- Check-in service at the reception
- Apple Pay
- Museum (in Ireland), instruction language
- Bolt application for transfers during project meetings
- Service experience at the doctor's
- New online medical public service in Poland



Think like a designer

- Be curious about people's experiences – what do they reveal about the current situation and their hopes for the future?
- Look ahead and anticipate – what new opportunities might emerge in the future?
- Emphasise empathy and understanding – what different perspectives are connected to the development process and the service in question? All of them are equally valid!
- Stay optimistic – even in challenging situations. By following the process, good solutions will emerge. Often ones that couldn't have been imagined at the start.
- Always be ready to experiment – that's how we learn! Through trials, ideas gradually move from thoughts to real-world solutions.
- Highlight collaboration and openness. See the richness that different stakeholders, skills, perspectives, and experiences bring to the table.



It is all about perspective and be able to move between different ones



ARVOISA ASIAKASI!
PYYDÄMME VÄLTÄMÄÄN
TARPEETONTA OLESKELUA
KORJAAMOTILOISSA!



Takuu 2 vuotta



KALASTUSTYÖ-
LAITTEEN HUOLTO
89€



| Process level: Doing Service Design

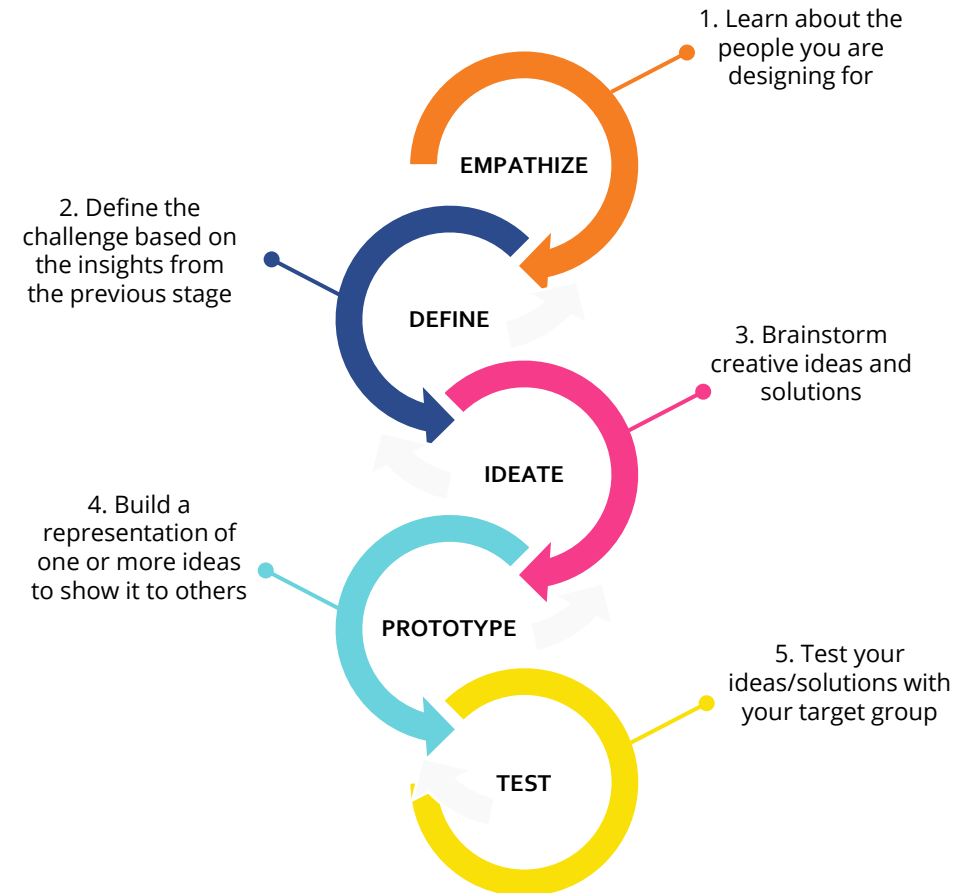
Design Thinking Process

Process model for solving problems and making everyday life of the people easier. It's built around the idea that best solutions will be found at the intersection of what's desirable (people want it), feasible (it's technically possible), and viable (it can succeed in the market).

The phases are:

1. **Empathize** – First, you spend time learning about the people you're designing for. This means observing, listening, and truly seeing the world through their eyes to uncover needs they might not even be able to express.
2. **Define** – Next, you organize what you've learned into clear problem statements. Instead of vague ideas, you frame specific challenges to address.
3. **Ideate** – Here, you brainstorm lots of ideas without judgment. It's about being open, playful, and pushing beyond the obvious solutions to uncover fresh, creative ones.
4. **Prototype** – Rather than jumping straight to the final product, you quickly build rough versions of your ideas. Think of it like sketching or making simple models – enough to test and learn without big investments.
5. **Test** – Finally, you put your prototypes in front of real users, gather feedback, and refine. It's not about seeking validation; it's about learning what works, what doesn't, and improving iteratively.

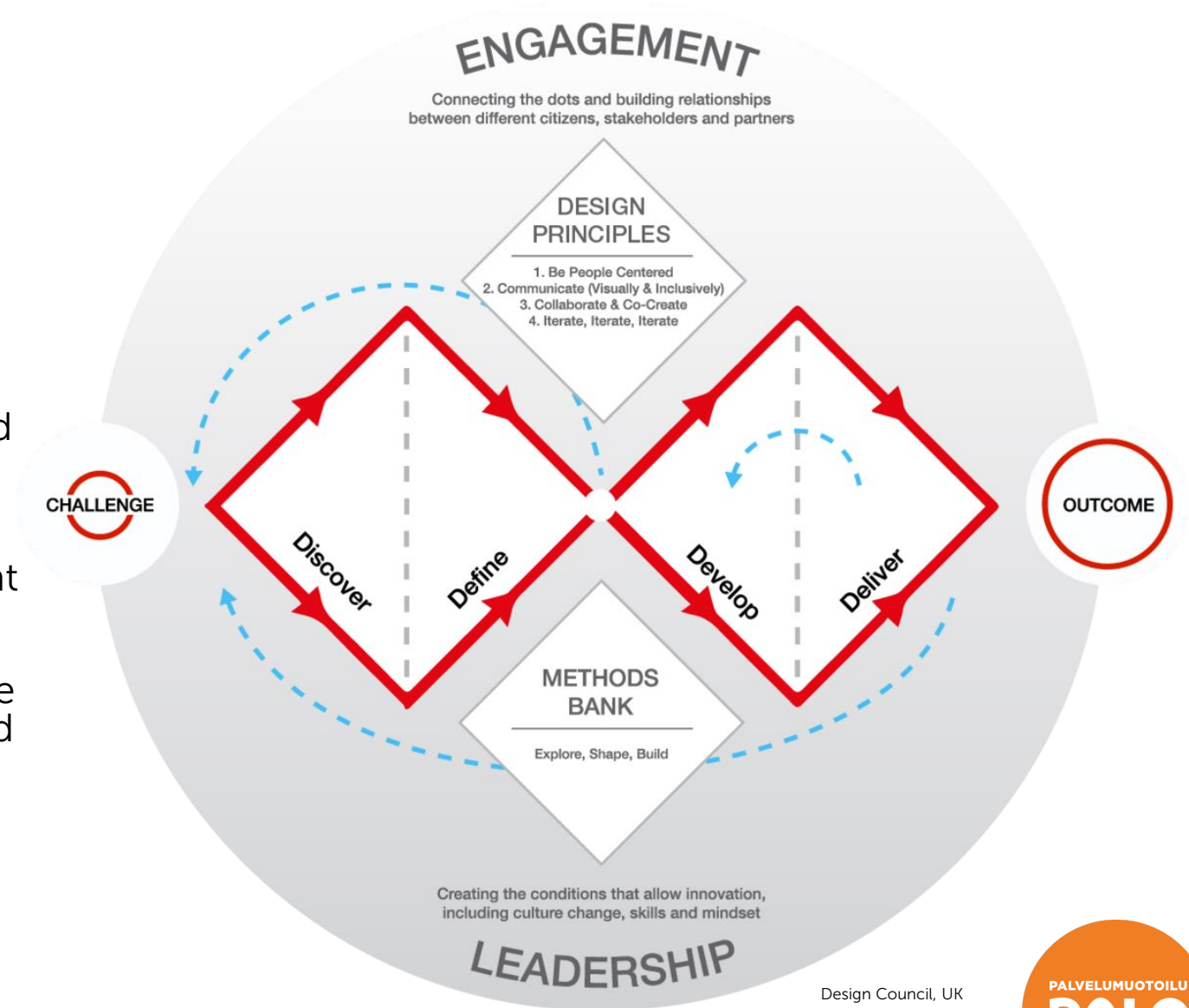
IDEO's 5 phases generally associated with design thinking



Sources: <https://designthinking.ideo.com/>
<https://dschool.stanford.edu/>

Double Diamond

- A design process model developed by the UK Design Council in 2005.
- Structured around two "diamonds": Discover & Define (problem space) and Develop & Deliver (solution space).
- Encourages divergent thinking to explore widely, followed by convergent thinking to focus and make decisions.
- Widely used in service design to ensure both the right problem is identified and the right solution is created.
- Supports collaborative and user-centered approaches, involving users and stakeholders throughout the process.



Design Council, UK

1. Empathize



Understand the people you are designing for by observing, engaging, and listening. This phase is about stepping into the users' world to uncover their needs, motivations, and challenges. By building genuine empathy, you lay the foundation for creating solutions that truly matter.

Tips:

- Observe users in their real context
- Conduct interviews to hear their stories
- Ask open-ended questions to explore deeper insights
- Watch for unspoken needs and behaviours
- Map the user journey to identify pain points
- Build trust and create a safe space for sharing
- Stay curious

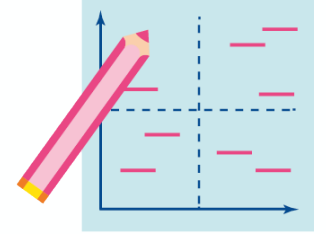
| We need to move away from thinking of **empathy as** an individual trait towards **a collective capacity**. In constructivist design research, a diverse group of people and things are brought into relation with one another. Here the opportunity is to create a version of **empathy that** recognizes its potential to **constitute new configurations of people and things**.

Lucy Kimbell

Kimbell, L. (2013). Before empathy: Keynote at Design Research Conference, IIT Chigago. In Design leads us where exactly? blog. Retrieved from <http://designleadership.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/before-empathy-keynote-at-design.html>.



2. Define



Make sense of what you've learned to clearly frame the real problem. This phase is about turning insights into a focused challenge that guides your design efforts. A well-defined problem sets the direction for meaningful solutions.

Tips:

- Synthesise your research findings
- Identify patterns and key insights
- Reframe the challenge from the user's perspective
- Create clear problem statements
- Use *How Might We...* questions to open up possibilities
- Align your team around the defined challenge
- Focus on needs, not solutions (yet!)

Good Life in Villages project



Photos: Antti Raatikainen. Students: Annika Heinonen, Anna Kempainen, Ossi Korhonen, Maija Rautiainen ja Petri Viherkoski.

3. Ideate



Generate a wide range of ideas and explore creative possibilities. This phase is about thinking big, challenging assumptions, and looking beyond obvious solutions. The goal is to spark innovation through diverse perspectives. Usually, experimentation follows ideation.

Tips:

- Encourage wild and bold ideas
- Build on each other's thoughts ("Yes, and...")
- Defer judgement and avoid early criticism
- Use brainstorming and creative exercises
- Combine and remix ideas to find new angles
- Aim for quantity first, then refine later
- Keep the user needs and problem statement in focus

Municipality of Ii: Co-design Day for Planning New Center



- The development needs of the municipality's center area were identified in a study concerning the residents of the area. The needs identified were the basis for planning and organizing a co-designing event for the residents.
- During the co-design day, **two** sessions were held where residents first worked in small groups and collaboratively generated ideas for a specific area of the town center. Then they made a design for that particular area. They used pen, paper and Legos in this stage.
- At the end of the event, all groups presented their ideas and collectively designed a new prototype of the center area.
- The outcome of the day provided the zoning architect with a strong foundation for drafting the final zoning plan.

Co-design day was a part of a project that won EU RegioStars Awards in 2017.



Ideating the center in small groups.



Collecting ideas together from all groups and making one joint prototype of the center.



Prototyping new center for li

| Conclusions

Remember

It is all about the process!

The goals of the process are to:

- Co-create – involve different stakeholders and perspectives
- Understand user needs and identify the real problem
- Generate alternative solutions to the problem
- Test the solutions in an agile way
- Design a solution that improves both the customer experience and the organization's success

Typical features of the service design process are:

- The alternation between creative and rational thinking
- Iteration
- Working with uncertainty



What is your takeaway?

5 min



Take a moment to reflect on the information and process you've heard about. What feels particularly meaningful to you today?

You said:

- The human element when designing a service is critical.
- Opening and closing - being bold to ideate and bringing the rationality later.
- We're about to make a big survey among immigrants and their employees - 1 of takeaways is that we need to pay special attention to the way we shape the questions and how we ask them, this is really important for future results and valuable conclusions to be made.
- Stay curious and open for ideas, no unnecessary holding back. That is always difficult when you usually need to be structured and rational.
- There are no bad ideas, everything needs to be talked about and debated.
- Human-centered approach to innovate, redefining ideating phase as not initial one.
- I also realized for a past couple of months we did DT workshops not knowing it was it well, the results are so so, but at least we got a drill.
- The idea of iteration which allow to learn and improve services based on accumulated knowledge.



Thank you!



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