

About

The d.school's mission is to help people unlock their creative abilities and apply them to the world. It reflects our foundational belief that design should be accessible to all, and that everyone is creative. The d.school helps people develop their creative abilities. It's a place, a community, and a mindset.

PUTTING DESIGN TO WORK — We build on methods from across the field of design to create learning experiences that help people unlock their creative potential and apply it to the world. Design can be applied to all kinds of problems. But, just like humans, problems are often messy and complex—and need to be tackled with some serious creative thinking. That's where our approach comes in. Adding the d.school's tools and methods to a person's skill set often results in a striking transformation. Newfound creative confidence changes how people think about themselves and their ability to have impact in the world.

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DEMONSTRATION ONLY



d.school (DSCHL)

Description:

A place for explorers & experimenters at Stanford University.

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Vision

Creation of the world we wish for.

Mission

To create learning experiences that help people unlock their creative potential and apply it to the world.

Values

Design: We believe design can help create the world we wish for. Design can activate us as creators and change the way we see ourselves and others. Design is filled with optimism, hope, and the joy that comes from making things change by making things real.

Diversity: We believe that diversity leads to better design, and opens up a greater range of creative possibilities.

Power Sharing: The nature of design affords people the opportunity and privilege to shape the world that they-and others-inhabit. This is power. In a just world, that power is shared, prioritizing the voices and ideas of people most impacted by the intended and unintended effects of new designs. We aim to actively confront and challenge the mindset that design can only be used by a privileged few.

Creativity: We believe everyone has the capacity to be creative.

Volunteerism: 100% opt-in culture. The people who are here want to be here. No student or faculty member at Stanford is required to participate.

Collaboration: Radical collaboration. To inspire creative thinking, we bring together students, faculty, and practitioners from all disciplines, perspectives, and backgrounds—when we say radical, we mean it! Different points of view are key in pushing students to advance their own design practice. Our methods become a shared language for groups to navigate the ups and downs of messy challenges.

Complexity: Unbounded problems. Like in life, there is no single right answer in a d.school class. The problems are complex and ambiguous. The solutions are uncertain and unclear.

Experimentation: We give students ample opportunities to experiment, take creative risks, and fail. It's great preparation for real-world problem solving—because it is real-world problem solving.

Problem Solving

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Projects

Develop projects that address real-world challenges.

Stakeholder(s)

Students

Non-Profit Organizations

Corporate Organizations

Government Organizations

Real-world projects. Students want to make real impact in the world. We think they can start immediately. Our classes challenge them to tackle problems that are happening right now, not the ones from a textbook page. We work with partners from non-profit, corporate, and government organizations to develop projects that address real-world challenges... [We apply] 8 core abilities:

1. AMBIGUITY

Navigate Ambiguity

This is the ability to recognize and persist in the discomfort of not knowing, and develop tactics to overcome ambiguity when needed. Design is loaded with uncertainty. As a result, it involves being present in the moment, re-framing problems, and finding patterns in information. Ambiguity can arise in many places – within a project, a process, or within oneself. It's important to put students in ambiguous situations and give them tactics to emerge from them.

1.1. Mindfulness

Be present in the moment.

1.2. Re-Framing

Re-framing problems.

1.3. Patterns

Find patterns in information.

2. LEARNING

Learn from Others (People and Contexts)

This means empathizing with and embracing diverse viewpoints, testing new ideas with others, and observing and learning from unfamiliar contexts. Throughout a design project, it's important to recognize and take the opportunity to learn from others—both end users and other stakeholders and team members. There is a sensitivity to others that develops with this ability.

2.1. Viewpoints

Empathize with and embrace diverse viewpoints.

2.2. Ideas

Test new ideas with others.

2.3. Contexts

Observe and learn from unfamiliar contexts.

3. SYNTHESSES

Make sense of information to find insight and opportunity.

Synthesize Information — This is the ability to make sense of information and find insight and opportunity within. Data comes from multiple places and has many different forms, both qualitative and quantitative. This ability requires skills in developing frameworks, maps, and abductive thinking. Synthesis is hard for new students. It takes time and is interdependent with navigating ambiguity.

3.1. Frameworks

Develop frameworks.

3.2. Maps

Develop maps.

3.3. Thinking

Develop abductive thinking.

4. EXPERIMENTATION

Experiment Rapidly

This ability is about being able to quickly generate ideas – whether written, drawn, or built. In order to rapidly experiment, you must be able to relax your mind and reach a mode of acceptance. This will eliminate the natural tendency to block ideas that seem off or unfeasible. Then, let your doing lead your thinking – and lead with your hands. This ability pairs naturally with Learn From Others. In many instances, you are experimenting by both generating a flood of new concepts at low resolution (brainstorming) and testing some of those concepts with potential users.

4.1. Brainstorming

Generate many new concepts.

4.2. Testing

Test some of those concepts with potential users.

5. STAKEHOLDERS & PURPOSES

Understand stakeholders and purposes in order to define products and services.

Move Between Concrete and Abstract — This ability involves understanding stakeholders and purpose in order to define the product or service's features.

Stakeholder(s):

Ray Eames :

We have Ray and Charles Eames to thank for helping us set the scene for this ability. It involves abstraction to define meaning, goals, and principles, as well as precision to define details and features.

Charles Eames

5.1. Connections

Nest concepts within the larger ecosystems to which they relate.

Everything is connected. When students are building out a new concept –whether a product, service, or experience – they need to be able to nest the concept within the larger ecosystem that relates to it.

6. INTENTIONALITY

Build and Craft Intentionally

This ability is about thoughtful construction: showing work at the most appropriate level of resolution for the audience and feedback desired. There are many sub-disciplines of design, each with their own set of tools and techniques. This ability requires a sensitivity to the tools needed to create meaningful work in your domain.

Stakeholder(s):

UX Designers :

UX designers have a specific set of tools to create human-centered digital interfaces.

Architects :

Architects have an arsenal of particular techniques to bring new structures into the world.

Disciplines :

Every discipline – immunology, macroeconomics, K12 education, whatever it may be – has its own building methods, and in every case, the details matter.

6.1. Resolution

Show work at the most appropriate level of resolution for the audience and feedback desired.

7. COMMUNICATION

Communicate Deliberately

This is the ability to form, capture, and relate stories, ideas, concepts, reflections, and learnings to the appropriate audiences. Communication happens in a variety of contexts. It may include reflecting on your performance to a project team or crafting a video to show your product to a potential investor. As we practice experiential learning at the d.school, communication and storytelling are paramount.

7.1. Formulation

Form stories, ideas, concepts, reflections, and learnings.

7.2. Recordation

Capture stories, ideas, concepts, reflections, and learnings.

7.3. Story Telling

Relate stories, ideas, concepts, reflections, and learnings to the appropriate audiences.

8. DESIGN WORK

Recognize projects as design problems.

Design your Design Work — This meta ability is about recognizing a project as a design problem and then deciding on the people, tools, techniques, and processes needed to tackle it. This ability develops with practice. We see it emerge in our more experienced students. It requires using intuition, adapting old tools to new contexts, and developing original techniques to meet the challenge at hand.

8.1. People

Identify the people needed to tackle problems.

8.2. Tools

Identify the tools needed to tackle problems..

8.3. Techniques

Identify the techniques needed to tackle problems.

8.4. Processes

Identify the processes needed to tackle problems.

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