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Design Thinking and the Marriott School

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Cover Page Footnote

Chemotherapy Redesign, n.d., retrieved from <http://centerforinnovation.mayo.edu/chemotherapy-redesign/>
Dam, R., & Teo, S. 5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/5-stages-in-the-design-thinking-process>

DESIGN THINKING

AND THE MARRIOTT SCHOOL

*BY CATHERINE GARDINER, MADIE NEELEY,
AND MAT D. DUERDEN*

EVEN THOUGH ITS ORIGINS EXTEND BACK MORE than 50 years, interest in design thinking has grown exponentially over the last 15 to 20 years across multiple industries, corporations, and universities, including Brigham Young University. With broad applicability and a human-centered focus, educators, researchers, and business executives have been using design thinking to develop innovative concepts and solutions. In this paper, we will first explain what design thinking is, how it is being incorporated into BYU in general, and finally, how design thinking is gaining a space in the Marriott School of Business.

WHAT IS DESIGN THINKING?

Design thinking is a methodology used to find creative solutions to “wicked” problems or conundrums that have multiple stakeholders and no clear solution. By drawing on elements of design and having a human-centered focus, design thinking produces a solution that truly meets the needs of the end user. The steps in this process include empathize (interview, observe, and survey to discover the needs of end users), define (determine the specific problem you are addressing), ideate (diverge with a multitude and variety of ideas before converging on a few), prototype (bring your idea to life with a simple tangible product), and test (gain feedback from people interacting with your prototype).¹ This process is iterative, and steps can be repeated as many times as necessary to fit a project’s needs.

Design thinking is used in a variety of contexts, including the growing technology industry, industrial design firms, and even hospitals, in order to help create user-focused designs and patient-driven services. For example, the Mayo Clinic’s Innovation Center has implemented design thinking to develop the layout for its state-of-the-art chemotherapy unit. The team used observations, interviews, research, and interactions with full scale mock-ups to empathize and prototype for possible design solutions. Private treatment spaces, a large pharmacy, and nursing stations dispersed throughout the unit were all included in the final design. Ultimately, they created architectural plans based on these insights and a unit with serene, comfortable, and efficient space was created. Design thinking takes real problems and creates real solutions.²

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH DESIGN THINKING AT BYU?

Increasing interest in design thinking through literature and innovation centers on BYU campus has led to multiple projects and curriculum implementing principles of design thinking. Industrial design, engineering, and other traditional design programs use design thinking often, however, the Kennedy Center and the BYU Library have recently been incorporating this methodology to enhance their offerings.

Within the Kennedy Center for International Studies, Professor Natalie Romeri-Lewis has been changing how students develop solutions. In her Topics in International and Area Studies classes, undergraduate students are given a problem that a country is currently facing, and then are assigned to use human-centered design to develop solutions. In the 2017-18 school year, projects included designing a sexual health education program in Cambodia and testing a design for a Columbian truth commission; both projects were prototyped and tested on fellow BYU students. The results were sent back to associated contacts in Columbia, and will hopefully make an impact on future decisions.

EMPATHIZE

DEFINE

IDEATE

PROTOTYPE

TEST

The BYU Library has used design thinking recently to prototype and test a new layout for their front counters as well as study desks. Following the 2017 Experience Design and Management Conference held at BYU, Library directors developed three ideas for a new layout for reference and check-out counters. Each idea was prototyped with movable shelving and signs and video recorded to see how students reacted to the changes. Flow of traffic was documented and plans to implement changes permanently are in progress. Both of these examples show that whether in engineering, social issues, or physical layout, design thinking is making an impact on the BYU campus.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH DESIGN THINKING IN THE MARRIOTT SCHOOL?

Design thinking is increasingly becoming a valued methodology by business leaders and the Marriott School is taking notice. Design thinking can be found in a variety of places through the MSB including the Ballard and Rollins Centers, student competitions, the Department of Experience Design and Management classes, and the new Design Thinking minor.

The Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance and the Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology both offer courses with design thinking content such as BUS M 312 - Innovation Bootcamp. The Ballard Center and the Department of Experience Design and Management recently co-sponsored the first Y-Prize Design Thinking Competition in which students enrolled in a design thinking workshop class in order to use the methodology to redesign aspects of the BYU experience to better promote lifelong learning and service.

The Department of Experience Design and Management (ExDM) has made a strategic decision to include design thinking as a focus competency for their students. The ExDM curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to

design, deliver, and manage meaningful customer and employee experiences. "Experience" is becoming one of the hottest buzzwords in business. As companies continuously strive to differentiate themselves from the competition, they must find ways to constantly improve their customers' and employees' interactions (or "touchpoints," as an ExDM student would tell you) with the business. Through the EXDM program, students apply design thinking fundamentals of ideating, prototyping, and testing to the design of experience journeys. Students also participate in a variety of hands-on, outside-of-the-classroom learning experiences through partnerships with local companies like Cotopaxi and 'Get Out Games' Escape Rooms. You can find EXDM graduates in a wide variety of professional fields employing their design thinking skill sets.

DESIGN THINKING MINOR.

As companies and organizations of all industries begin to embrace the idea that customer experience is king, the Marriott School's Experience Design and Management Department, in collaboration with the Instructional Psychology and Technology Department, the Department of Design, and the School of Technology, introduced a new Design Thinking minor (available starting Fall 2018) that helps students learn and apply design principles in creating solutions to industry problems in a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment. The minor's course outcomes include a study of design discipline and implementation, as well as creative discovery and inquiry, and ends with one final, culminating project meant to integrate design thinking with students' individual majors or interests.

Four courses in the minor are offered from the Marriott School of Business' Department of Experience Design, including "Creating a Good Life," the introductory course to the ExDM major focused on positive psychology and the power of experiences; "Experience Facilitation," a course dedicated to the elements and skills needed to stage

meaningful and memorable recreational experiences; “Experience Design,” an introduction into the processes of design thinking and the customer journey; and the “Experience Design Lab,” a capstone class intended to challenge students to find and present real-life solutions to a company of their choice.

For more information about the Design Thinking Minor visit: education.byu.edu/ipt/designthinking

HOW IS THIS RELEVANT TO BUSINESS?

How is design thinking relevant to business, especially inside the Marriott School? The answer can be found using the tenets of what design thinking is. Design thinking involves the ideating, prototyping, testing, and iterating of an idea in a collaborative setting. At its core, design thinking encourages individuals to freely share their personal insights, allowing for a team to work together to find a solution that not only addresses a problem, but unifies those who took part in creating the solution.

Additionally, through design thinking, an organization or company can find creative, lasting, and meaningful

solutions to everyday challenges faced by the organization’s clientele. By taking time to “empathize” with the end user, businesses are able to develop a relationship with their customer base and find ways to better address their needs. Through the iterative nature of design thinking, improvements can be made (and remade) as the company strives to find the best possible solution to a problem. This communication and effort helps build customer rapport with the brand, which in turn can increase profits.

In today’s competitive business world, companies set themselves apart by producing new products and services and tackling issues that seem unsolvable. Becoming competent in design thinking sets a student apart as they are able to enter the workforce prepared to meet the complex challenges that await them.

Notes

¹ Chemotherapy Redesign, n.d. Retrieved from <http://centerforinnovation.mayo.edu/chemotherapy-redesign/>.

² Dam, R., & Teo, S. 5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/5-stages-in-the-design-thinking-process>.