CLP
IN PRACTICE

Design Thinking

Crafton Hills College

In fall 2021, representatives from Crafton Hills College (CHC) came together at a Student Services Design Lab hosted by Career Ladders Project. Faculty, staff, and administrators came ready to creatively problem solve for areas they identified as presenting barriers for students attempting to access resources. CHC brought data about students' experiences with navigating career exploration and transfer opportunities. They wanted to reimagine how students access services, using what they learned during the Covid-19 pandemic about offering services remotely and applying it to student services after they return to campus.

Student-Centered Design

Using a design thinking process, the colleges moved through the stages of a human-centered design approach to develop a prototype to bring back to their college constituents. Starting with the first stage of design thinking—empathy building—college faculty, staff, and administrators spent time looking at data to understand the student experience, making observations to help them better understand where students encounter pain points in trying to access services. They then began to define the problem or student challenge in a clear and nuanced way, the second stage of design thinking. Finally, they worked through the third and fourth stages of design thinking—ideating solutions and developing a prototype. As CHC brings their ideas back to the college, they can gather more input and test out the prototype with students and colleagues.
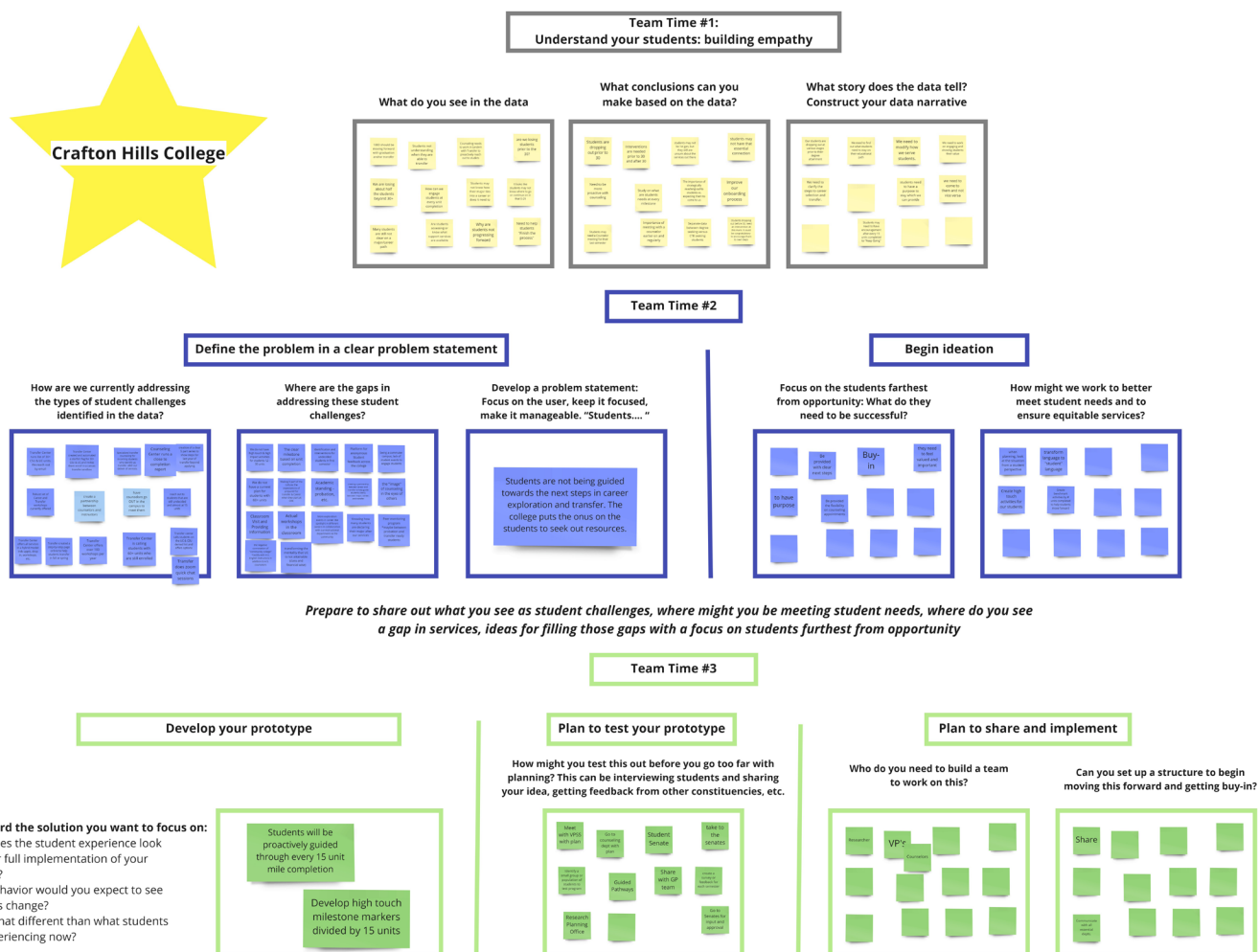
> Design thinking can be used as a tool to center disproportionately-impacted student experiences in order to design creative solutions.

A Tool for Creative Problem Solving

Design thinking can be used as a tool to center disproportionately-impacted student experiences in order to design creative solutions. This creative problem solving can break through stagnation, pushing colleges to get bold and do something new. Built into the design thinking approach is testing the design idea or the solution and iterating for continuous quality improvement.

Example: Design Thinking Session

The whiteboard below is from the design session. CHC used an abbreviated design thinking approach in a live zoom session. To view the board in detail, click on the link.

Crafton Hills College

Team Time #1:
Understand your students: building empathy

What do you see in the data

What conclusions can you make based on the data?

What story does the data tell? Construct your data narrative

Team Time #2

Define the problem in a clear problem statement

How are we currently addressing the types of student challenges identified in the data?

Where are the gaps in addressing these student challenges?

Develop a problem statement: Focus on the user, keep it focused, make it manageable. "Students.... "

Students are not being guided towards the next steps in career exploration and transfer. The college puts the onus on the students to seek out resources.

Begin ideation

Focus on the students farthest from opportunity: What do they need to be successful?

How might we work to better meet student needs and to ensure equitable services?

Buy-in

Prepare to share out what you see as student challenges, where might you be meeting student needs, where do you see a gap in services, ideas for filling those gaps with a focus on students furthest from opportunity

Team Time #3

Develop your prototype

Storyboard the solution you want to focus on:
- What does the student experience look like after full implementation of your solution?
- What behavior would you expect to see with this change?
- How is that different than what students are experiencing now?

Students will be proactively guided through every 15 unit mile completion

Develop high touch milestone markers divided by 15 units

Plan to test your prototype

How might you test this out before you go too far with planning? This can be interviewing students and sharing your idea, getting feedback from other constituencies, etc.

Student Senate

Guided Pathways

Share with GP team

Research Planning Office

Plan to share and implement

Who do you need to build a team to work on this?

Can you set up a structure to begin moving this forward and getting buy-in?

VP's

Share

A snapshot of the key steps of CHC's design session is represented below. This is a sample of a few ideas that emerged in each brainstorming step. The full whiteboard from their design session can be seen on the link.

Empathize: Understand the student experience

Students not understanding when they are able to transfer

Importance of meeting with a counselor earlier on and regularly

We need to work on engaging and showing students their value

Define: Understand the problem

We do not have high touch & high impact activities for students 12 - 30 units

Students are not being guided towards the next steps in career exploration and transfer. The college puts the onus on the students to seek out resources

Being a commuter campus, lack of student events to engage students

Ideate: Brainstorm creative solutions

When planning, look at the situation from a student perspective

transform language to "student" language

Create benchmark activities by # units completed to help students move forward

Prototype: Develop a prototype, plan to test and share

Students will be proactively guided through every 15 unit mile completion

Identify a small group or population of students to test program

Communicate with all essential departments

To use a design thinking approach to redesign aspects of the college experience, college leaders start with quantitative and qualitative data to help define the challenges students face. A combination of focus groups, surveys, and institutional data is ideal to provide both the qualitative and quantitative data that will give a full picture of what students are experiencing and how that may be impacting their ability to succeed. Including students in the design thinking process as partners can also support a focus on the student experience. To ensure the design process is focused on students furthest from opportunity, colleges can use disaggregated data that reveals the disproportionately-impacted groups. Anchoring discussions throughout the process in ways to serve the students furthest from opportunity is critical to designing solutions that are not recreating the same opportunity gaps.

> **Anchoring discussions throughout the process in ways to serve the students furthest from opportunity is critical to designing solutions that are not recreating the same opportunity gaps.**

CHC left the design lab with a design idea to solve the problem they had identified. As they gather more feedback from students, faculty, staff, and administrators, refine the idea, and "test" it out as a prototype, they can continue to iterate beyond the initial implementation. Design thinking principles include testing out the intervention to learn. Colleges can pilot or implement to refine the intervention before full-scale implementation. In the pilot or early implementation stage, the college teams can gather input from the disproportionately-impacted groups the intervention was designed to support and continue to make adjustments.

Career Ladders Project | 678 13th Street, Oakland, CA 94612 | www.careerladdersproject.org