Our Workshop Story: Summer 2019 Space Camps

SUMMARY

During the summer of 2019, ROCKiT hosted two professional development opportunities for MMSD staff with the goal of cultivating and enhancing MMSD strength in innovation (Strategic Framework: Lever 5). These Intro to Design Thinking workshops gave MMSD staff members and students a chance to to learn about and practice the stages of Human Centered Design, Liberatory Design and Lean Start Up. Over three full days, ROCKiT immersed 40 participants from schools and central office in new processes, tools, resources and ways of thinking. Through hands-on activities and a real life design challenge, workshop participants explored how these universal tools could transform their professional practice.The following narrative describes what happened over these three days and the prototypes that came out of this work.

DAY 1:

The ROCKiT Launchers: Intro to Design Thinking Workshop was held in the Learning Lab of American Family Institute for Corporate and Social Impact. ROCKiT kicked off the morning with brief introductions and a *stoke* (in this case, called "Fail Test") to get the group moving and ready to work. The stoke served two purposes, as it also set the tone for three days of FAILING FAST, FAILING FREQUENTLY and FAILING FORWARD.

Beth Vaade provided a bit of insight into the purpose and some of the work that we as the ROCKiT Innovation team are doing within the Madison Metropolitan School District, as well as some background about our partnership with American Family Insurance.

Once everyone was grounded in the work, participants paired off for a 90-minute sprint where they were tasked with reimagining their partners' lunchtime experience. The goal of this fast, 90-min design sprint was to engage and ground the participants in the entire innovation process. An unintended benefit of the 90-min sprint was that it also acted as a community builder and helped workshop participants build trust.

Lastly, we wrapped up the morning by going through the Paseo Protocol, an activity that encourages participants to identify important aspects of their identity and how it both informs and impacts their

lives, experiences, education and their approach to designing. The Paseo Protocol calls out to participants their need to always be aware of who they are in relationship to the user and the design.

After lunch, participants got into teams of four or five (a mix of school based, district employees, and at least one MMSD high school student) to engage in a longer, 2-day design sprint. The challenge statement for the first workshop was "*How might we reimagine the back to school night/ open house experience?*" The second workshop was charged with rethinking "*How might we reimagine community involvement in schools?*"

In order to prepare teams for their empathy field work, participants were taught how to conduct empathy interviews and observation. After developing interview scripts, teams had two hours to go out into the neighborhood and gather as much empathy as possible surrounding their given challenge. Teams talked to people on the street, visited coffee shops, grocery stores, and even at the nearby car wash. Some teams made phone calls in order to gather empathy and generate insights. Once empathy was collected, teams returned back to our learning hub to analyze their empathy data and generate insights.

DAY 2:

We kicked off Day 2 with a Stoke called the Value Card Sort as a way to stoke our brains and get ready for another full day of human centered designing. Teams then spent the majority of their morning working on the Define stage of the work. Teams were given a Client Template the Point-of-View Madlib template to support them defining both the client and the problem that they need to solve for. Once completed, teams were ready to move on to the Ideation phase.
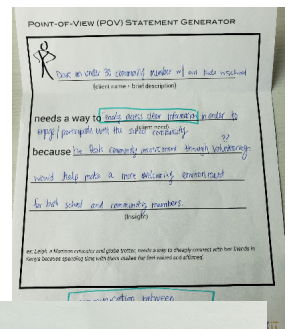
In preparation for the ideation step of the design thinking process, participants engaged in a quick 30 Circles brainstorming activity. The goal of this activity is to push people to go bold, get into a creative headspace, and push for quantity over quality. The morning closed with taking some time to come up with ideas for reframing our general challenges around open house/welcome back days and community engagement into more specific problem statements for the chosen point of views. For example, *Dave, an under 30 community member without kids in school* needs a way to *easily access clear information in order to engage/participate with the school community because he feels community involvement through volunteering would help make a more welcoming environment for both school and community members*.
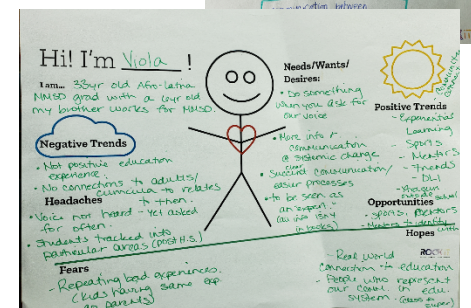
Teams enjoyed diverging in thought and coming up with as many bold solutions to their specific client's dilemma as possible, but of course you can't test them all! So, they worked through a matrix of crucial assumptions, prioritizing solutions and components of solutions into how easy or difficult they

may be to execute versus how wild or intriguing they may be. The more difficult and wild ideas were the "game changers" that deserved a bit more exploration.

Teams spent the bulk of the afternoon planning out and actually building rough prototypes of the team's solutions (both processes and experiences) for real people to interact with and give feedback on. While building, teams also had to take time to decide what they were truly testing for. Was there a certain way people needed to interact for the solution to be successful, was success dependent on some outside entity, would their solutions be used in the way they expected, or did they even hit the mark for what their client really wanted and needed? Again, they ranked these wonderings into what was most unknown and most critical for their success.

Workshop 1 - How might we reimagine the back to school night/ open house experience?

Team 1 Solution
Team 1 created a district-wide back to school event that accommodated all families from all areas. This approach allowed families to attend one event, for multiple students and to create a larger community feel in MMSD. The district-wide welcome back included a ton of resources for each grade level, language support, pep rally style events, a dunk tank, space for club sign up and even booths to connect with the various Madison community centers.

Team 2 Solution
This team decided to go with a system of traveling welcome back trucks. This idea focused more on providing families with connections, resources and opportunities than it did to getting them into the physical schools. The trucks included resources for enrollment, school supplies, volunteer opportunities, books, and other useful resources. The trucks could access school areas, parks and neighborhoods, school events, etc and could be repurposed throughout the school year to fit the needs of ongoing MMSD events.

Team 3 Solution
Team 2 created a Welcome Back extravaganza that included everything the interviewees' hearts desired. There were photo booths, ways to sign up and connect with the schools via any mode of social media. There were tons of ways that families could engage with important MMSD information, school staff, and other local families.

Team 4 Solution
Team 4 decided to combine our love of sporting events and education to create a sports event type of experience

for the back to school night. Families could engage in art, tech and music activities, there was food, and sports challenges. Participants could try a free throw extravaganza, volleyball challenge, football throw, and golf activity. They could do individual tasks or team activities, even joining forces with staff members. All-star ballots and prizes rounded out the experience.

Workshop 2 - How might we reimagine community involvement in schools?

Team 1 Solution
This team developed an MMSD app where families and community members to access information based on their desired attendance areas. Users could customize the entire application, including choosing multiple attendance areas (not based on student enrollment), from hundreds of languages, which types of notifications to receive and how often. The app included information on volunteer and donation opportunities, social events, interest groups and it even connected to students' Infinite Campus accounts for ease of access.
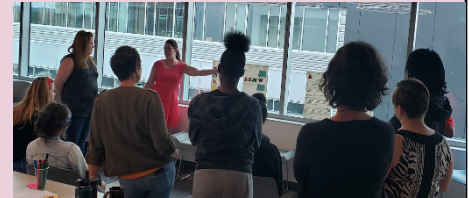
Team 2 Solution
The Lancer Loft was the community space that combined aspects of a community school and community center into one. The Loft offered an abundance of resources. There were meeting, tutoring and quiet work spaces, as well as areas to socialize with other families,board members and school staff. The Loft also offered spaces for children to play (with childcare for special events) and workshops for resumes, college enrollment, FAFSA and things of that nature. A calendar of events

included learning opportunities, chances to connect with staff and other families around education and other similar interests, films, cooking classes, seasonally based activities and fun for family members of all ages.

Team 3 Solution
Team 3 created an MMSD volunteering app. Its purpose was to allow community members to seek out and be matched to volunteering opportunities based on location, time available and activities of interest - sort of like a dating app, but for MMSD. Community members were prompted through a series of questions that narrowed down their preferences and were ultimately matched with a variety of opportunities from reading in classrooms, to repairs and cleaning, to copying, filing and organizing, to making things at home, donating funds and items, to anything in between. Selected opportunities were calendared and reminders sent. Information was saved in case there were no current matches but future opportunities arose. Community members were able to add notes and reviews on placements and even had the opportunity to be notified when similar volunteer opportunities became available. The group even tinkered with how this concept would connect with informing community members on widely accessible kiosks, like those gas station displays, instead of a word of the day, upcoming school events.

DAY 3:

The morning of Day 3 was probably the most amazing and daunting segment of the entire process. It is the time where teams put their hard work and prototypes to the test. During a speed dating style rotation, teams presented their solutions to various community members who explored, tinkered with, questioned, and offered feedback about each of the prototypes. After the initial rotation of testers, teams were able to reflect on the feedback given and adjust their prototypes accordingly.

The afternoon of Day 3 was dedicated to giving workshop participants the space to think deeply and plan for how they might use these new skills and resources in their professional work. After showcasing Liberatory Design case studies to provide inspiration, workshop participants then broke off into groups to discuss how the learning from the workshop could be used in their various departments, school sites, classrooms, teams, activities, and lives with their peers, colleagues, students, families and other stakeholders. The ROCKiT team offered support, guided discussions, and answered any questions that came up.

The workshop closed out with a reflection circle as participants considered what they would be taking from this experience and how they could infuse this process and key mindsets into their work in the upcoming school year.