

# SENSE MAKING AND SYNTHESIS

Transforming research insights into opportunities

Class 6 March 18 2025

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## Today



Download your learnings



Sensemaking to define a Point of view (problem statement)

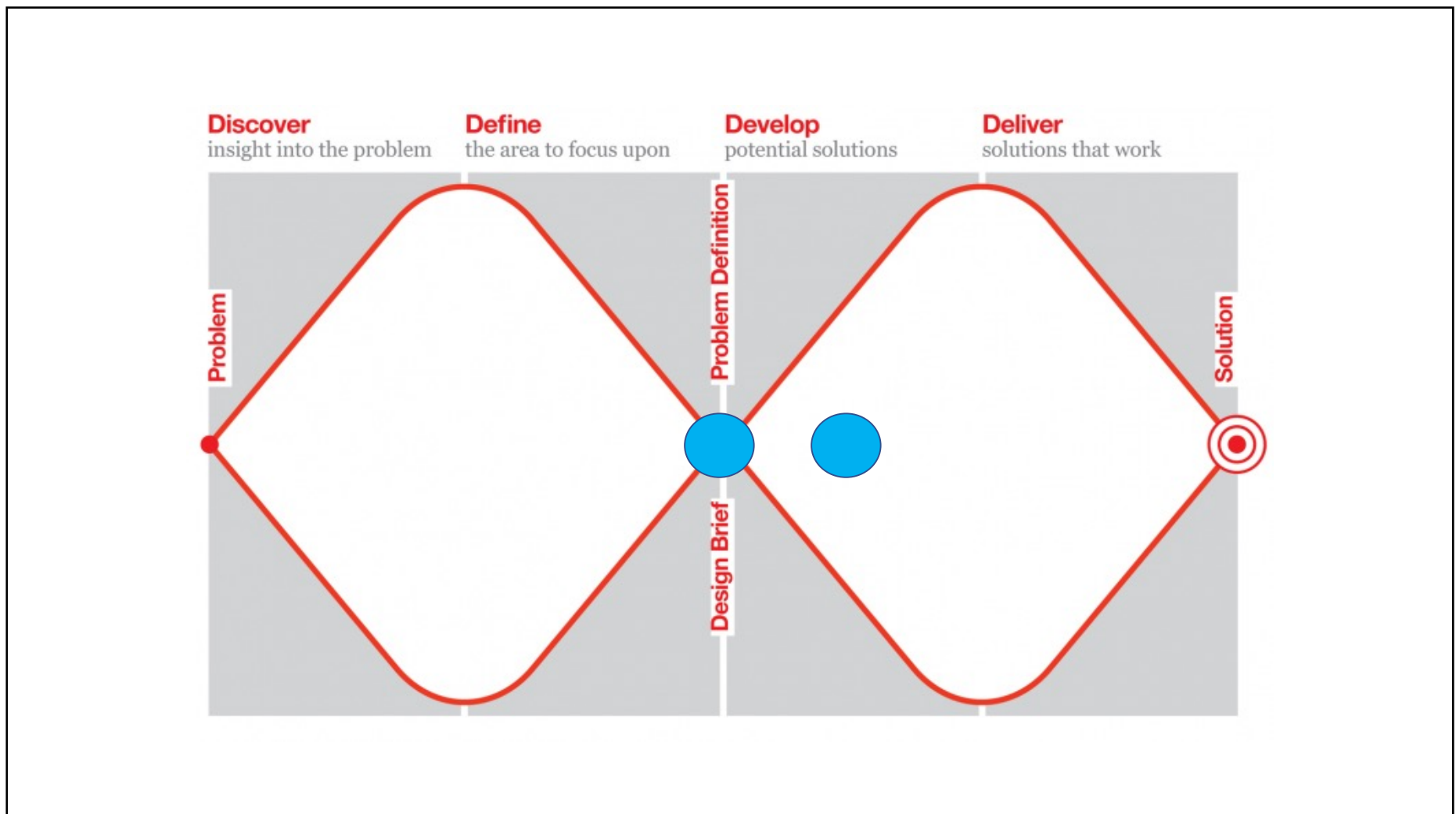


How might we



Start ideating!

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Sense making is the collective process of organizing and distilling information to gain a more complete understanding of your challenge.

You synthesize to analyze your research for insights that inform the development of your solutions!

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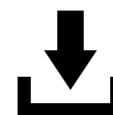


## Key questions

- What were your assumptions and how did they change?
- What are interesting facts, stories, themes and existing solutions from your secondary research.
- What are stories, quotes, observations from primary research?
- Who are stakeholders within your problem space?  
Organizations? Places? Institutions?

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## Download your learnings

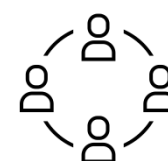


**1 |** Cluster the Post-its together as you put them on the wall or on a board so that you have a record of your discussion.

**2 |** When it's not your turn, pay close attention. Feel free to ask questions if something isn't clear.

**3 |** Share insightful stories and programs

*Aim: Collectively we know...*



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<div>NO</div> <div>YES</div>	
Summary / key words	Quotes / specific facts
Migrants need community	<p>“Ebriama shared that he only steps out for places he is familiar with (this means knowing that there are open positions), typically learning about these spots from friends or his local community.” Workshop with Ebriama, young man from Gambia, arrived few months ago in Lisbon</p> <p>“Visiting experts at the Association Maisuno Maisum in Bairro do Talude yesterday, we learnt that immigrants usually move to communities where they already have a family support system or those with cultural proximity.” Notes from visit to Bairo de Talude, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024</p> <p>“It’s not just about paperwork and language. People need to feel that they belong here—that they’re not outsiders forever. A simple event calendar or group chat can mean the difference between isolation and integration.” —Andrea, Volunteer</p>
Speaking the language is important	<p>“I got promoted to the manager of the restaurant. Now I can’t be promoted anymore because I don’t speak Portuguese. My manager told me you can’t read the papers. He is right. I need to learn. That’s my next goal.” A 20+ year-old Indian woman, who did a Bachelor in Science in India and then a Master’s of Medical Science in Denmark. Has been two years in Lisbon.</p>

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<div>NO</div> <div>YES</div>	
Summary / key words	Quotes / specific facts
Speaking the language is important	<p>Iman mentioned that language barrier was one his biggest obstacles. He regrets not having learned Portuguese right away ... When he decided to learn the language, there was a long waiting list for the courses. Now, he is on the same lower level and wishes to improve his communication in terms of Portuguese.</p> <p>“During our journey to Talude, our Bolt driver shared his views on the area, revealing prevalent prejudices and safety concerns, a sentiment that unfortunately reflects broader societal attitudes towards this neighbourhood”</p>
There are a lot of prejudices toward migrants	<p>Many old people are racist and do not want non-white caregivers, reject them flat out and even refuse to speak to them/address them. Interview with Social worker working on a new health service offering – Fidelidade</p> <p>“I don’t feel comfortable. I don’t like them. [What about them? Tell us a story.] I don’t know. I have never met any of them [migrants].” (small village in France]</p>

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# Look for themes

## **The “What” behind learnings from early research.**

A way to distill and synthesize our learnings so we have the right information to ultimately help us build insights

## **How to develop them**

Take the raw data in the form of evidence and look for patterns.

You know it's a theme when you're able to say: “There is something about...” and there is support from multiple sources.

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# From themes to insights

## Themes

**The “What” behind learnings from early research.**

A way to distill and synthesize our learnings so we have the right information to ultimately help us build insights

### How to develop them

Take the raw data in the form of evidence and look for patterns.

You know it's a theme when you're able to say: “There is something about...” and there is support from multiple sources.

## Insights

**The inspiring articulation of “Why” a problem exists and how people experience the problem.**

They reveal a key tension in the world of the users / customers. Explain *why* the user feels they way they do.

### How to develop them

After we have a collection of themes, we take an expansive look at everything we've learned. We write insights to clearly articulate why a problem is happening in the world of the user / customer.

Once we have a collection of insights, we have a strong foundation to come up with ideas to solve the *right* user / customer's need.

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## From insights to opportunity areas



Insights are discoveries that you might leverage when creating solutions.

Often grow from contradictions between two users' attributes or from asking yourself "why" about a certain behavior or situation



Opportunity areas are generative.

Leverage insights to turn problems into solutions.

Themes for ideation.

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## Reframing to define a generative problem space

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# Embrace

**The Challenge: Design a better incubator for the developing world**

Each year, 20 million premature and low-birth-weight babies are born. In developing countries, mortality for these infants is particularly high because incubators are extremely rare. Most hospitals and clinics in developing countries don't have enough incubators to meet the tremendous need. New incubators are extremely expensive, and donated incubators are confusing to operate and are difficult to maintain and repair.

**The Insight**

The Embrace team began their need finding in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. After spending several days observing the neonatal unit of the Kathmandu hospital, the team asked to be taken outside the city to see how premature infants were cared for in rural areas.

They learned two alarming things:

- 1. the overwhelming majority of all premature Nepalese infants were born in these rural areas.
- 2. most of these infants would never make it to a hospital.

**Reframing:** To save the maximum number of lives, their design would have to function in a rural environment. It would have to work without electricity and be transportable, intuitive, sanitizable, culturally appropriate, and perhaps most importantly—inexpensive. The Point of view: <https://vimeo.com/22342241>

**The Product** “The design looked something like a sleeping bag. It wrapped around a premature infant, and a pouch of phase-change material (PCM) kept the baby's body at exactly the right temperature—and maintained this temperature for up to four hours. After four hours, the PCM pouch could be “recharged” by submerging it in boiling water for a few minutes.



# Embrace



## Point of view (problem statement)

## A human-centered point of view

```
[name }
```

[user need requiring a solution]

\_\_\_\_\_ needs a way to / wants to \_\_\_\_\_ [Action]

[key insight about this user/stakeholder]

because

[Motivation]

**but**

[Tension]

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# Point of view

## Parents in rural areas need a mean to transport safely their premature baby to an incubator

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## Personas

A persona is a composite character that represents a segment of people. Based in research, the persona may contain a name, quotes, characteristics, goals, challenges, and motivations in order to create a clear picture of who the character is and what challenges he/she faces.

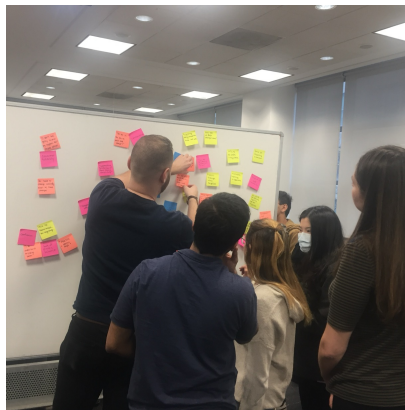
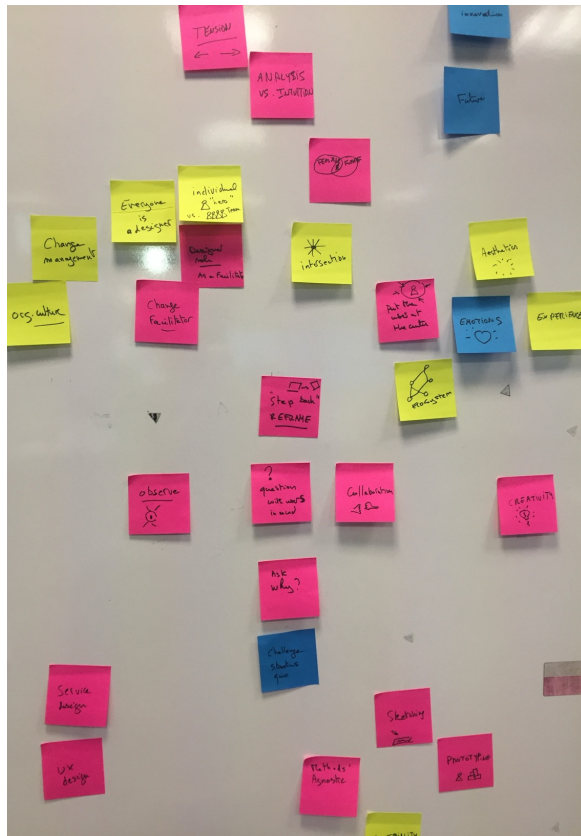
- General representative characteristics but also specific ones (a name, an age, a gender, an occupation, etc.).
- Desires, motivations, expectations and needs

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 <p><b>Mark Smith</b></p> <p>"I'm on budget again this month."</p>	 <p><b>Amy Fung</b></p> <p>"Give mother earth a break! go eco-friendly."</p>
<p>Mark is a 20--year-old student in NYC. He currently works part-time at Dunkin' Donuts. He is trying to save money to pay his student loan. He has a strict budget paying for meals.</p> <p><b>Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get food with lower price</li> <li>• To grab his food quickly at a nearby restaurant</li> <li>• Be able to order food via phone</li> </ul> <p><b>Frustrations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited budget for quality food</li> <li>• Not too many options for low-priced food</li> <li>• Not sure how much she helped the environment</li> </ul>	<p>Amy is a 42-year old newspaper editor with two children. She cares about the environment issues and she wants to teach her kids to care of the environment through action.</p> <p><b>Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect the environment</li> <li>• To know if the food has good quality</li> <li>• To teach her children about protecting the environment through action.</li> </ul> <p><b>Frustrations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not being able to find eco-friendly restaurants</li> <li>• Most of the reviews online are irrelevant to her</li> <li>• Not sure how much she helped the environment</li> </ul>

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**How Might we?  
Opportunity  
areas**

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## From problem to opportunity



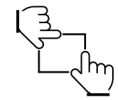
**Someone needs something to help them fulfill their needs**



**There is an opportunity to provide (who) with (what) so that (value/gap filled/pain point alleviated)**

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# From problem to opportunity



**Parents in rural areas cannot take their premature baby to a hospital that has an incubator**



**There is an opportunity to facilitate access to incubators for families in rural areas.**

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## How Might We...?

**Every challenge presents opportunities.**

Frame the challenges of your research findings as opportunities for design.

A 'How Might We' (HMW) is a question designed to spark and direct the ideation process.

It is derived from the design challenge and the insights from research.

### HOW

*implies that there's a way to get there,  
we just need to figure out how.  
It's optimistic.*

### MIGHT

*means that you don't have to get it right  
the first time, and that not every solution  
will work.*

### WE

*means working all together on a team, not  
as individuals.  
It implies commitment:  
We, not others, will solve this problem.*

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## Let's get going!

In your team define a HMW question from your Problem Statement.

### A great HMW question...

#### ... addresses human needs found in the research

"HMW make a nicer-looking tote bag" might not reflect what people want or need.

#### ... is positive and optimistic

"HMW make it easy and efficient for customers / stores to..." is positive.

#### ... is not too broad or too specific

"HMW create a better recycling experience" is too broad.

#### ... sparks a lot of ideas

"HMW design a recycling poster" might be too narrow for a brainstorm.

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## How might we?...



- Way to frame a problem space to generate ideas
- Not too specific; not too general
  - How might we redesign public toilets in India? (**too broad**)
  - How might we create a door knob for Indian toilets that's clean, safe and invite people in? (**too specific**)
  - How might we create a sense of safety in public toilets (**generative**)

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## From problem to opportunity



Parents in rural areas cannot take their premature baby to a hospital that has an incubator



How might we create a product / service that allow parents to take their premature baby to a hospital safely (in less than 4 hours)?

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## How might we?... (High employee turn over)



- Problem: We have high employee turn over
  - How might we improve our employee experience?
- One insight: meetings are killers
- Led to several “How might we...?”
  - How might we reduce the time employees spend in meetings by 25%?
  - How might we reimagine the role meetings play in our culture?
  - How might we make meetings the most useful part of our day?
- Lots of good questions: **Pick one!** (Not a combination, or cluster)

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# Brainstorming



30 min

1. **On your own:** Think of possible ideas. Go for quantity! (5 min)
2. **As a group:** share and build upon. (20 min)
3. Vote for top 3 ideas and select one to develop (5 min):
  - Think of:
    - “It rocks my world”: so much impact and so inspiring!
    - It solves a real problem (needs)
    - We can make it happen (feasibility)
    - Such a cool idea! (originality)
4. Fill in the idea board



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## BRAINSTORMING RULES

Defer judgment

Build on the ideas of others

One conversation at a time

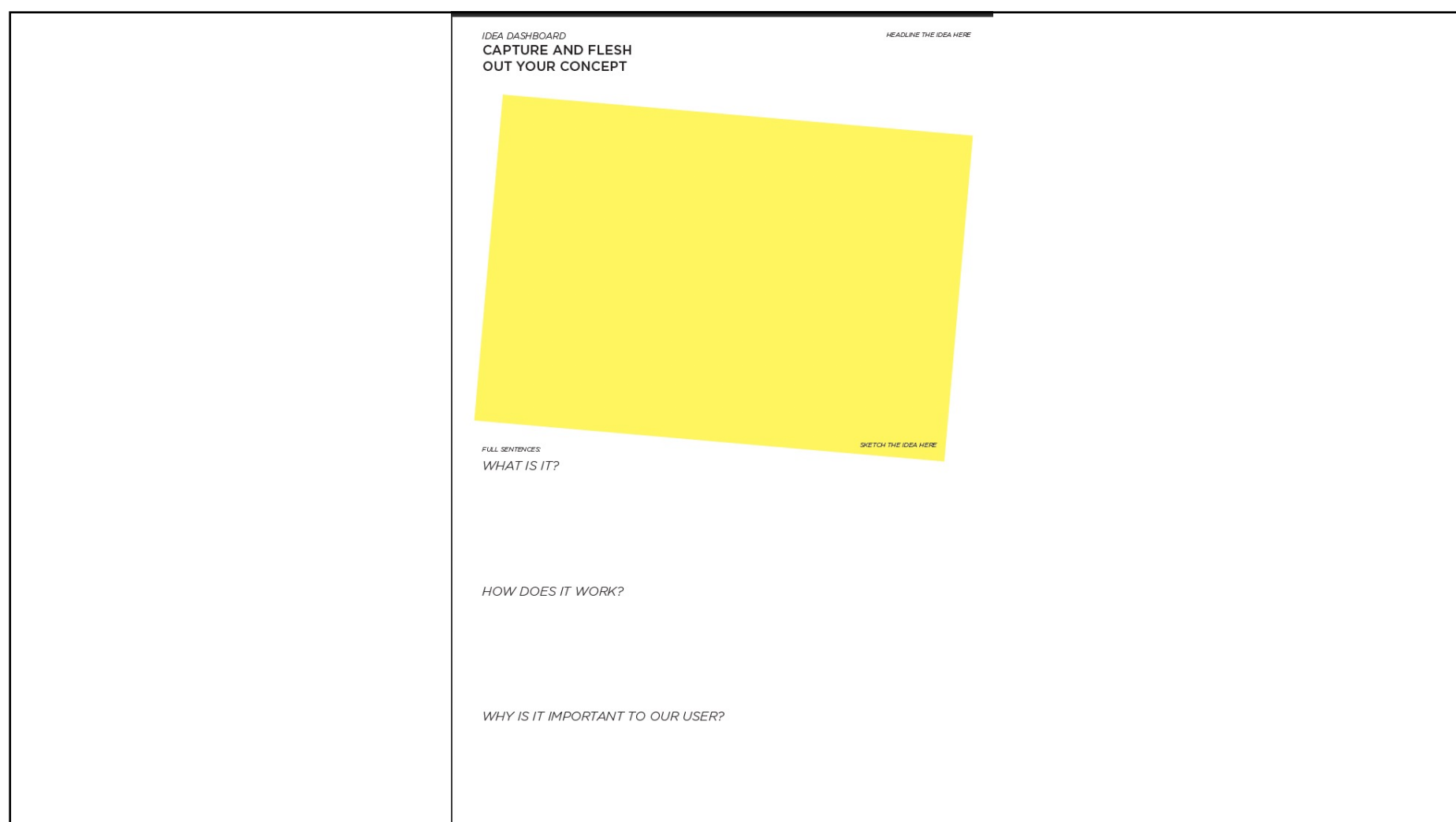
Stay focused on topic

Encourage wild ideas

Be visual

Go for quantity

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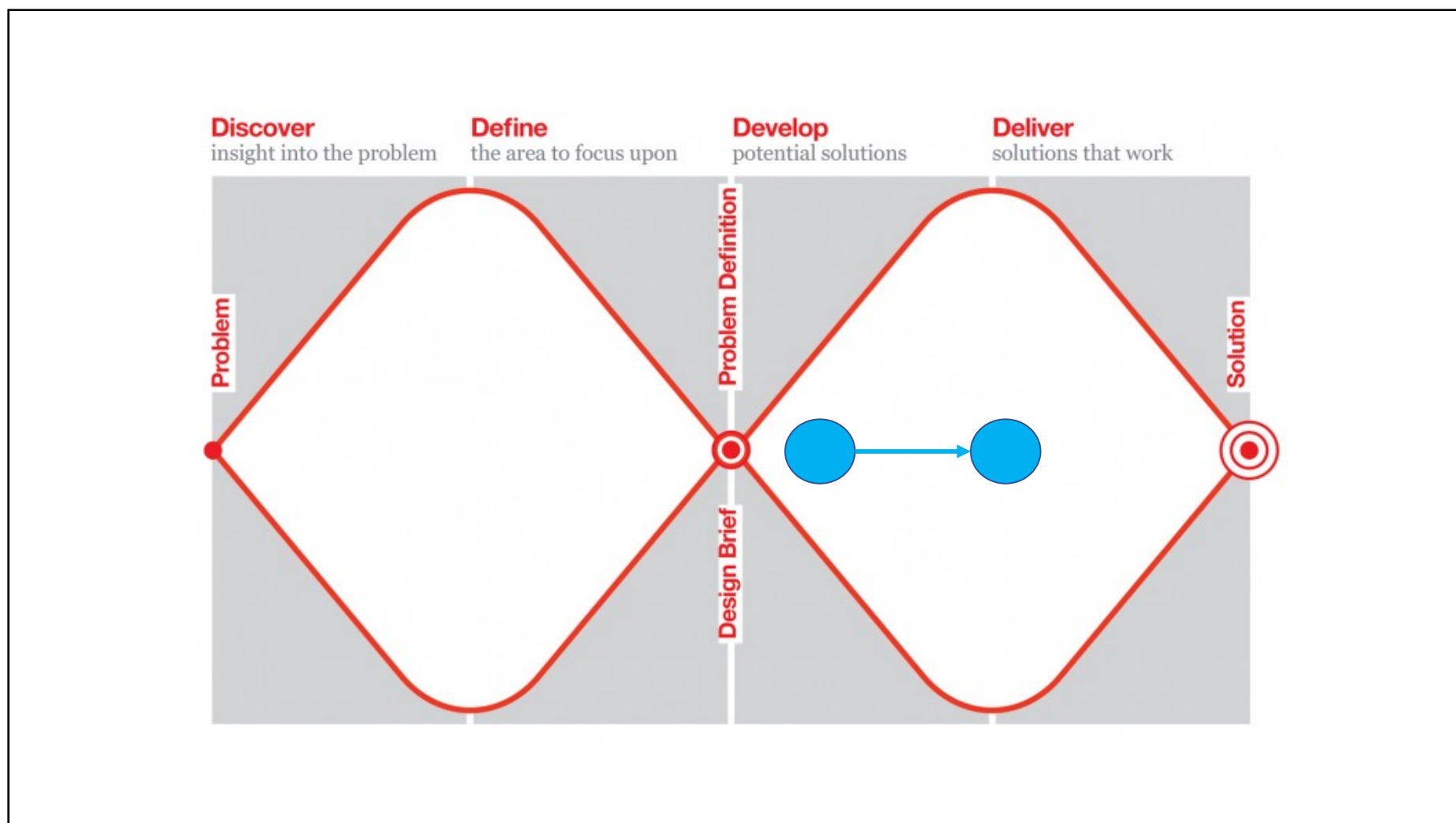


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## At the end of class

- Post on Teams:
  1. Picture of Synthesis (+ note summary with top ideas and the one selected)
  2. Point of View
  3. How might we
  4. Results of your first brainstorming: List all the ideas

## For class 7 (April 1st)

- Finalize research and update theming
- Finalize brainstorming
- Run a second one if needed
- Post on Teams:
  - Updated theming and updated brainstorming

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