

Writing a Design Challenge

Framing Your Challenge

The framing of a Design Challenge sets the stage for you to explore characters and problems within a situation. The best framing showcases a wicked, as opposed to a simple, problem. Start with an issue you are interested in pursuing, say “the rise of Type 2 Diabetes”. Then, you will identify principle stakeholders in the issue.

Stakeholders

List all of the principle stakeholders, and even some secondary stakeholders who are affected by your wicked problem. Staying on the Diabetes challenge, the list would include: teens with pre-diabetes, teens with Type 2, adults with pre-diabetes, adults of various ages with Type 2, doctors, health coaches, nurses, caregivers, family members, and so on.

Geographical Limits

Are there geographical limits? Type 2 Diabetes is now world-wide, so you may want to impose your own limits in order to give yourself a manageable challenge. You could say, “The spread of Type 2 Diabetes among suburban “bedroom” communities. This still contains multiple stakeholders, but gives you a manageable area to look into.

1 Write At Least Three Variations Of The Challenge

You want to write a lot of variations of the challenge - never rest on the first idea you have.

The Components Of A Strong Design Challenge

1. Does the challenge contain a variety of explicit and implicit human needs?
2. Does the challenge allow for a range of solutions?

Hook - Does the challenge grab your attention? Does it make sense why there is something to solve there? Is it easy to understand but difficult to master? Can you express this Hook to others?

Scope - Are there multiple users to design for? Is there a setting? Are there multiple problems to work on?

Trade-offs - Some trade-offs to consider : How much time should we spend on each stage of the design process? How ‘close to home’ should the challenge be? Sometimes, when you are too personally involved, you can’t be objective about your work.

Access - Do you have access to the challenge? If it’s about the airport, then can you get behind security? How are the students going to be able to interact with users?