Understanding the User Experience: Empathy Tools & Techniques

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Objectives

- Recognize how a user-centered approach helps build empathy for others’ experiences
- Appreciate the value of user-centered techniques in improvement efforts
- Practice conducting an “empathy interview”
- Learn how High Tech High utilized empathy interviews in the Mathematical Agency Improvement Community (MAIC)

Norms

- Be present
- Listen to understand
- Defer judgement
- Share the air
- Equity is the center
- Honor confidentiality
WHAT IS A USER-CENTERED APPROACH?

- Explicit understanding of users, their tasks and environments
- Active participation of users
- Iterative process of refinement
- Consideration of the whole user experience
- Multidisciplinary skills and perspectives
DISCUSS WITH A NEIGHBOR

• How did your definition align with the one given in the video? What was similar? What was different?

• What struck you about this video and why?

• Why would empathy be important in improvement efforts?
CORE PRINCIPLES OF IMPROVEMENT

Be problem-focused and user-centered

Organize as networks

Attend to variability

Learn through disciplined inquiry

See the system

Embrace measurement
Types of Knowledge to Bring to Our Understanding

- Local Data
- Voices of users
- Practical Expertise
- How Work Gets Done
- Scholarly Expertise
“If I had an hour to solve a problem, I’d spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions.”

- Albert Einstein
SOME TIPS FOR CONDUCTING AN EMPATHY INTERVIEW

- Intro
- Project
- Intro Yourself
- Build Rapport
- Explore Emotions
- Evoke Stories
- Question Statements
- Thank & Wrap-Up

Adapted from Michael Barry
Purpose: To understand someone's experience with math, and the factors that supported or hindered their mathematical success.
PREPARE FOR EMPATHY INTERVIEWS

With a partner:

- **Question selection/creation** (5 min)
  - What questions would you like to ask?
- **Organize and predict** (2 min)
  - What order will you ask them?
  - What is one thing you think you will hear?

Each of you will interview someone new!
CONDUCT OUR EMPATHY INTERVIEWS
(8 MIN EACH)

Pair up with another pair. Swap partners.

- Seek to understand, not confirm

- Listen and PROBE
  - “Tell me more…”
  - “What was that like for you?”
DEBRIEF: SHARING ROUNDS
Groups of 4. Designate a facilitator/timekeeper.

New person starts each round. Share the air.

Content (2 min): What is one thing that struck you about your partner’s math experience?

Process (7 min): How did it feel to be the interviewer? To be the interviewee?

Takeaways (3 min): What is an idea, question or next step you are taking with you?
THE NATION’S FIRST GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION WHOLLY EMBEDDED IN K-12 SCHOOLS
IMPROVING STUDENTS’ MATHEMATICAL AGENCY AND SUCCESS

- Foster growth mindsets
- Create inclusive, equitable mathematical learning communities through productive group work and status interventions
- Shift mathematical discourse and assessment to be more student-centered
  - “You, y’all, we” instead of “I do, we do, you do”
HOW DID TEACHERS IN MAIC USE WHAT THEY LEARNED?
Abolishing the phrase “I’m not a math person.”
Questions?
Center for Research on Equity & Innovation (CREI) at the High Tech High Graduate School of Education
Protocols: https://hthgse.edu/CREI/protocols/

Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (Stanford’s d.school): https://dschool.stanford.edu/
JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

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Thank You!