



# Design Thinking Workshop

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A Backpack Interactive Workshop



*About the workshop*

# *Jump-start your product design with a design thinking workshop*

Whether you're designing an entirely new edTech product or addressing user feedback on an existing one, design thinking workshops help your team develop a shared vision.

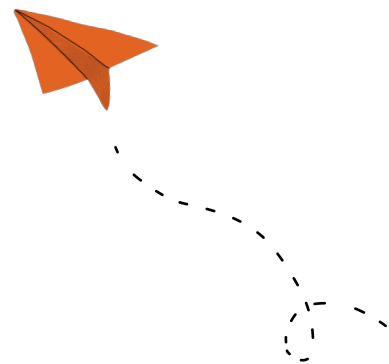
Maybe you'll use the workshop to generate product ideas or sketches. Maybe you're ready to build a clickable prototype!

Wherever you are in the design process, this workshop will cultivate a company-wide understanding of your product and user-related issues.

Inside, you'll find examples of how to set up collaborative software to conduct your meeting. We're big fans of [Miro](#), but you could also use [InVision's Freehand](#), [Figma's FigJam](#), or [Google's Jamboard](#).

**Use these templates to generate ideas, foster discussion, and align everyone from development to sales on your decisions.**

Let's get started!



## Workshop Agenda



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### ***What you need before you start***

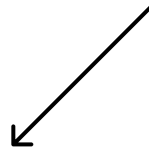
Before the workshop, have your team brush up on your brand's personas, as well as any research relevant to your design thinking. A comprehensive list might include:

-  Research-validated personas, including teachers, students, administrators, and parents
-  User journeys that detail how products might be used in and out of the classroom
-  Discovery work, including a competitive audit of other edTech products
-  User surveys
-  User testing results
-  Additional research data

You may even want to develop a brief for people to read ahead of time, or give a more specific "homework" assignment prior to the workshop.

This will help align all of your stakeholders quickly, so you can get right down to work!





## ***Setting up your agenda***

Before the brainstorming truly begins, it's important to level-set with your stakeholders.

This will help your workshop participants develop the same working understanding of your users and their needs, from teachers working in hybrid classrooms to students learning at home.

For example, if your workshop goal is to design a new product feature, it would make sense to pose initial questions like:



Why do you need a new feature? Will it improve learner engagement? Will it improve the teaching or learning efficacy of your product?

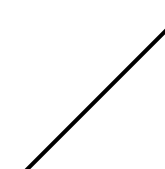


What kind of feedback are you getting from teachers about your product?



Do you have analytics that highlight specific user challenges?

We recommend taking more than two hours to outline any definitional terms, describe your process, level-set with stakeholders, and brainstorm potential features.



Other helpful agenda items include:



Describing the specific purpose or goal of your workshop



Telling your team what they can expect to do



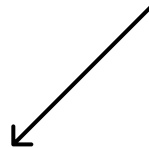
Outlining the structure of your workshop, including break-out sessions, voting, or breaks

The image shows two overlapping presentation slides. The background slide is titled 'Workshops Overview' and contains a table of the workshop agenda. The foreground slide is titled 'What are our goals?' and lists four specific goals for the workshop.

Workshops Overview	
9 AM	Intro & Ice breakers
9:30 AM	Review & align on persona work
10:30 AM	Breakout groups: reward systems
11:30 AM	Present reward solutions in context of personas
12:00 PM	Break for lunch
1:00 PM	Discuss next steps Celebrate your brilliance!

### What are our goals?

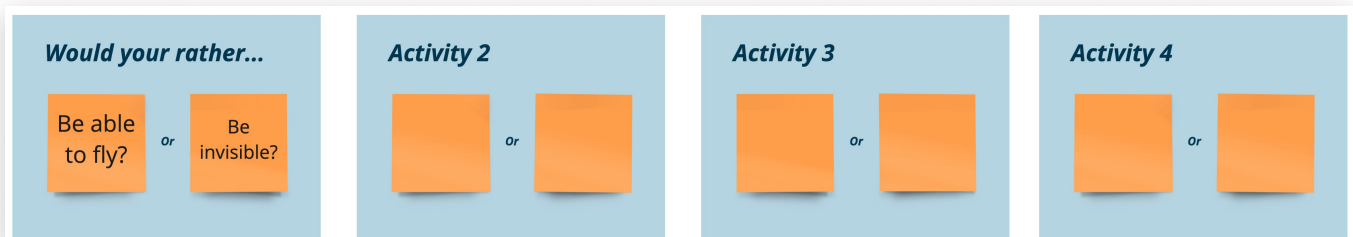
1. To align on why we need a new badging or rewards system for students
2. To hear all team perspectives
3. To use this workshop to develop possible solutions for our product teams to work on next sprint
4. To identify next steps



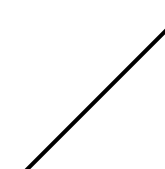
## ***Setting the mood***

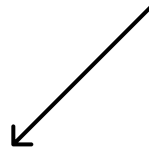
Participating in a design thinking workshop can be nerve wracking. Consider how you can introduce a fun, light, and exciting atmosphere to your workshop to help everyone's creative juices flow.

Maybe you can play energizing music. Or begin with an icebreaker activity. You might even find ways to bridge work and fun together. For example, before you vote on product priorities, throw out a few goofy questions for everyone to vote on first. Or get the adults in the room to engage with a kid-like activity geared toward the age group you're designing for.



Your participants should feel comfortable throwing out design concepts that might not work. By embracing "mistakes" and misdirections, your team will find the solution that checks all the right boxes.





### ***Make space for impractical and wild ideas***

If your goal is to identify three potential features for your edTech product, make space for out-of-the-box or disruptive solutions.

As a facilitator, you might ask questions like:



What happens if we change our technology delivery device or formats? If VR, handwriting recognition, or other innovative solutions were suddenly possibilities?



What happens if we apply our current thinking to a different content area? Can we apply the same design principles for our literacy tool to a math tool?

By asking questions that seem like they're outside the realm of practical possibility, you'll actually coax more surprising solutions out of your team.

## *A (Loose) Workshop Structure*

### ***Re-visit your user journeys as a team***

The most challenging part of any design workshop is to guide your team into the world of the problem and into the world of the persona.

If you focus on understanding why teachers are struggling to create student reports, for example, you'll pave the path for better suggestions and more creative problem-solving.

Ground your discussion of the problem in your user journeys and personas. Step stakeholders through a product experience from start to finish:



What do teachers or learners do at each step of the journey?



How does this product integrate into the rest of a teacher's day?



What's the user journey like on the sales side?



How do you talk to administrators considering purchasing the product?

## Whole-team brainstorming

Understanding user journeys in a more nuanced way will ultimately help your team put personal preferences aside as they drum up solutions.

Develop feature suggestions for each of your personas, keeping their high-level goals and needs top-of-mind.

**Question:** *What are the features or product attributes that would create an ideal user experience for each of these personas?*

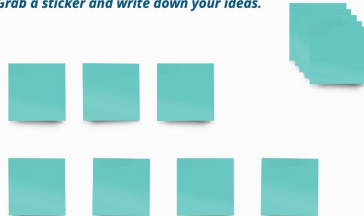
### Students

- K to second grader
- Developing foundational math skills
- Responds well to interactive learning activities
- Wants to learn while having fun and receiving positive reinforcement

#### Questions to consider:

1. What are students' goals?
2. What feature(s) would support them reaching that goal?

**Grab a sticker and write down your ideas.**



### Teachers

- Early Childhood Educator
- Aware of multiple instructional approaches
- Feels pressure from school principal to demonstrate student growth
- Limited instructional time and limited resources with growing demands and responsibilities

#### Questions to consider:

1. How do we provide teacher PD & onboarding product?
2. How do we use product to extend learning experience between teacher & student?

**Grab a sticker and write down your ideas.**



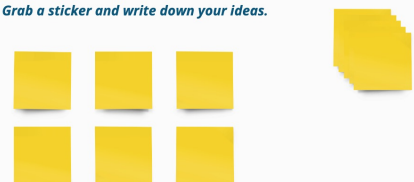
### Administrator

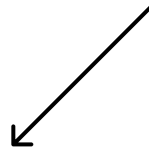
- Elementary school principal
- Concerned about demonstrating student achievement in math
- Looking to provide teachers with new instructional tools
- Need assessments that provide new insights and that can guide instruction school-wide in order to address instructional gaps.

#### Questions to consider:

1. How do we introduce this disruptive approach to admins?
2. What is the Efficacy Story/Marketing Story for administrator users?

**Grab a sticker and write down your ideas.**





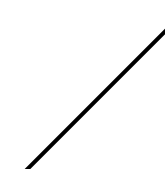
## ***Voting and discussing the votes***

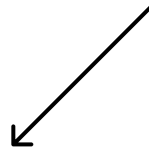
Once you've brainstormed solutions to an existing user challenge as a group, hold a vote.

Simple majority votes or up-down counts quickly establish the priorities of your stakeholders and give you a sense of where the room is at.

But don't stop there! Be sure to discuss the potential impacts or outcomes of following the vote, too.

Persona 1 top votes	Persona 2 top votes	Persona 3 top votes	Persona 4 top votes
<div>Badges</div> <div>animal characters</div> <div>student goal setting</div>	<div>Updates on student goals</div> <div>Family communication</div>		



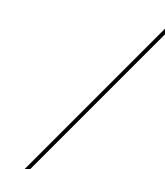
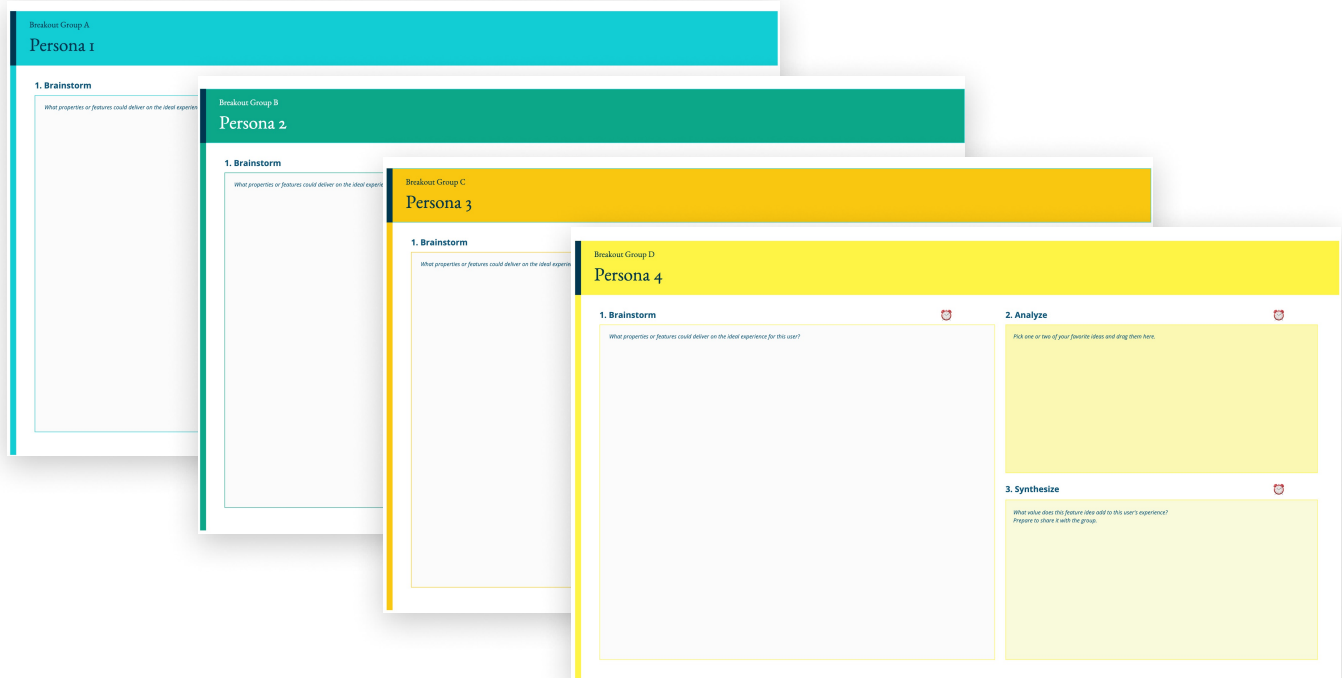


## ***Create breakout groups based on your new direction***

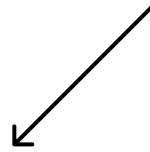
After voting on your team priorities, break the workshop attendees into small groups by user persona. In breakout rooms, they can further refine ideas before coming back to the team.

If you're designing a new feature for a reading tool, for example, have breakout groups consider the ideal user experience for students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

Which ideas will help users meet their goals? How does the best idea add to a student's experience within your product?







## ***Group presentations***

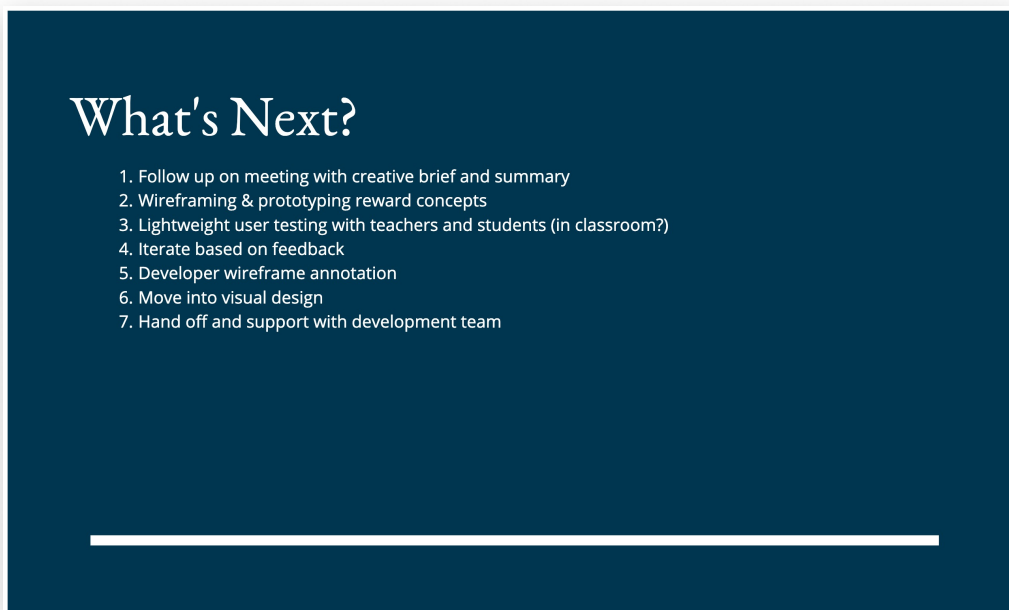
Once your small groups have brainstormed, analyzed, and synthesized their thinking, have group members present their thinking to the entire team.

Vote again, remembering to ask the same reflective prompts to clarify and refine your priorities.

## ***Reflection***

By the end of the day, you'll be ready to think about all you've generated and uncovered.

Ask your team to reflect on their experiences in the workshop, which opportunities they're excited to tackle next, and what lingering questions they still have.



## *Additional Tips & Tricks*

Facilitating a successful design thinking workshop is no small feat.

You're responsible for making sure your team walks away from the meeting with everything they need to move forward in the design process.

Here are a few additional facilitation tips and tricks to keep top of mind during the workshop:



The more you know about people participating in advance, the better.



Consider the perspectives that each participant brings to the table, from product designers to marketing team members.



Solicit ideas from participants who aren't the loudest voice in the room.



Look for the right time to ask stakeholders to comment on the group's thinking.



Keep your workshop goal in mind during the entire meeting.



Anticipate redirecting the conversation and moving on from ideas that aren't relevant.



Save any ideas that aren't directly related to the goal for later—you might revisit them in the future.

## *Use Our Workshop Templates*

Good news! If you don't want to design your own Design Thinking Workshop from scratch, you can now use Backpack Interactive's templates to get started.

Miro published our Design Thinking Workshop right on their platform, so you can access a customizable template any time for free.

Ready to get started? Check out the template [here](#).

Interested in learning more about collaborating on Miro or setting up your own account? Go [here](#).

Happy brainstorming!





# *Ta-Da!*

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**We hope our guide to Design Thinking Workshops inspires your next edTech product.**

Want to schedule a workshop led by the Backpack Interactive team? We can make that happen!

Drop us a line below and tell us about your project. We can't wait to hear from you.

Get in Touch

