**Design Principles**

**WHY use design principles**

Design principles are strategies to solve a design challenge independent of a specific solution. You, as the designer, articulate these principles, translating your findings – such as needs and insights – into design directives. These principles give you a format to capture abstracted, but actionable, guidelines for solutions, and communicate your design intentions to others.

**HOW to use design principles**

Develop a list of statements – using imperative phrasing – that outlines essential guidelines to create successful design solutions. The guidelines should distill your understanding of the design space and user. That is, you define what would be the meaningful challenge to solve, based on your empathy work, and then create the design principles to outline what’s necessary to achieve that success.

You develop design principles in a number of ways. You can translate your point of view, needs, and insights into design principles by stating your findings in terms of solutions rather than the user, while maintaining the focus on the user-centered needs and insights you discovered. For example, a user’s “need to feel instrumental in creating a gift” could become a design directive that the solution should “involve the user in creating the final gift outcome.” You can also back out design principles from potential solutions that you and users find compelling. Ask yourself what aspects of the solution resonated with users, and those aspects may be abstracted and formed into design principles.

Design principles should be statements independent from the specific implementation – i.e. useful guidelines regardless of the particular solution. However, it is helpful to identify the broad solution context to help you develop design principles. For example, you may know that you are designing a physical space – that would help you understand how to phrase your principles. In another case, you might know you are creating a gift – but not know whether it will be physical, digital, or experiential. Still, that context would allow you articulate the principle mentioned above to “involve the gift-giver in creating the final outcome.”

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**Invite multiple audiences**
**Extend nature of classes**
**Diversify learning opportunities**
**Encourage diversity of students**
**Extend contact beyond physical walls**

Houses your things
Showcases your work
**Allows access to unique people and resources**
Nurtures a community