


Design Thinking — Individual Reflections

Team



Zeno Kapitein

Within this project I noticed myself growing comfortable with the role of facilitator, a term I had not considered for myself before. Throughout the process I tried to bring structure to our process by writing along with discussions and synthesising ideas, while being mindful of letting every voice in our team be heard.

Our team was characterised by interpersonal respect and creative autonomy. We experienced very little conflict, partly thanks to the biweekly reflection sessions. We also guided ourselves through the process by discovering, using and adapting tools creatively and appropriately. In my opinion we were truly a  of a team.



Josefine Wetterwik

In this project I learned the importance of always making it a point to prioritize the team, even when faced with challenges within the project. This allows for a supportive space to be created that encourages the team members and helps the team to grow. This is something I feel like our team was successful in. I also learned the importance of transparency and being open about feelings which I tend to struggle with at times.

Overall it was a great experience working in this team. We were well aligned with our goals and expectations for the project and we were able to use tools and adapt them to our advantage to in the end deliver a solution that we all felt proud about.



Debora Viegas

My most significant learning in this project was the power of sections to talk about our vulnerabilities helping us to grow as a team and received empathy from each other. I had difficulty in some situations to express myself, but after reflections and feedbacks, we opened space and was more comfortable to work through our challenges.

I also learned that moments to take a breath and to read something related to our main subject were essential to help us in changing our minds, see different perspectives and apply alternative tools.



Devika Goel

Having worked for 3 years in an environment which prohibited the show of feelings, emotions, or vulnerability, working with this team was like a breath of fresh air. They gave me an opportunity to be me the truest version of myself. Constant reflections, feedback and break times made our team a safety net for me to explore my ideas and face my challenges in.

This experience taught me the importance of putting people and their feelings before processes, especially during challenging times and the importance of creating a safe space for individuals to thrive in.



Elizabeth Nair

Coming into this project, I felt unsure of what I knew and what I could bring to the table. Slowly as we learnt what Design Thinking really was, I realised that it was a methodology I have been using without giving a name to. This led to take on a more facilitator role during discussions which gave me a sense of confidence in my work and working with the team.

My biggest takeaway was how much good dynamics can affect a group and its outcome. Individually we have the knowledge to create a product but by working together and picking up for each other, we were able to make something we were proud of.

Team



Inspiration Walk

What we liked

The change in environment allowed for a mental break.

Being in the environment our project was based in allowed us to make group observations that unified our thinking.

What we would do differently

As useful as it was, we arrived here at a time of desperation. It would have been useful if we were doing it more frequently so as to not reach our frazzled state.

Stinky Fish

What we liked

Good start to the project as we were then on the same page about each other's traits. The vulnerability that came out of the tool gave everyone a sense of security and belonging moving forward.

What We Would Do Differently

We never physically referred to the stinky fish throughout the project. We would re-do the stinky fish in the middle of the project to add on any additional traits we might not have thought about. We would have looked at the stinky fish again at the end to see if they came up and how we dealt with it.

Team Canvas

What we liked

It was a good add-on from the sticky fish as a start to our new team dynamic.

What we would do differently

The team canvas was done before we knew the brief, so it was hard to populate the canvas. We might try doing it after understanding the workload.

It didn't feel as important or relevant to us as we thought it would be due to the fact that we never faced large hurdles. Further exploration on this tool needs to be had when we are faced with a more hectic team.

Personal Reading Time

What we liked

We decided to have reading time from 15:30 – 17:00 everyday to allow us research time for our essay. It gave us time to experiment in ideation. All ideas were based on academic and real-life sources. This was one of the ways we were able to put the team first.

What we would do differently

During the end of the project, we ended up skipping reading time often to prioritise the client project.

We might try to change the timing of reading time. Ending with reading time meant everyone was dispersed at the end of the day which meant we weren't able to check out. We might try checking out before reading time to signify that reading time is personal time. We could also make a conscious decision to check out after reading time to ensure everyone felt closure. Or we could have it in the morning when everyone feels fresh.

Team Canvas

What We Liked

We had a routine of starting two days with a reflection. The ritual gave us comfort in knowing that our voices were being heard. Our frequency gave time for personal reflection on each topic, allowed time for us to course correct and align expectations on the smallest of issues.

What We Would Do Differently

We could have had a session outside the school setting to allow for a different mindset.

Understanding People — Individual Reflections

Team MVP'Z



Victoria Ng

One of the main takeaways from this module was understanding the importance of building a strong work culture. With a shared set of values and beliefs, we were able to work in dynamic conditions and adapt to changes.

Although the shift towards remote working had played an emotional role, continuous practice of retrospective activities and being mindful of each other's headspace had allowed me to expose my vulnerabilities. This exposure led to trust and transparency, knowing that my team will be respectful of my needs and demonstrate a sense of empathy. This module taught me the importance of team alignment and that if team members share a common goal, conflicts and feelings of discomfort can easily be solved.



Pooja Vaidya

In this module, I realised the importance of communicating your thoughts and feelings in a group. The safe space is important in a team, it helps give equal time for speaking for each member and makes sure each voice is heard and acknowledged. Having this kind of vibe within the group, motivated me to voice myself better and contribute more in the process.

Even when the course went remote, having this safe space helped us transition very smoothly. We as a team, religiously checked in & check out, had reflections and feedbacks etc, this helped us as a group align with each other, understand needs and where they stand. Using these tools, ensure that no one is left behind in the process



Marcos Arruda

The opportunity to work on this team made me understand that when we create a safe space, we have more possibilities to evolve and grow as a team and individually. Group management techniques and tools were used to facilitate the development of strong ties between teamwork. We made constant use of reflections, feedbacks, check-ins and checkouts, which throughout the process made me feel more confident and calm.

The team invested time to understand the needs of each member and define the roles of each one; this made the results to be optimized. Through assertive communication, we were able to experience the four stages of group development.



Zeno Kapitein

Our group was characterised by respect and care for each other – there was an unprecedented soft kindness, which was exactly what we needed during the transition to remote because of COVID. We also all felt a great deal of uncertainty around the course subject. While we had stipulated that our project was about learning design research rather than delivering something to the client, it took me a long time to fully come to peace with the project's scope and content.

As a means of feeling more in control of the process, I brought the same meticulous planning and management style from the previous project – but it cost a lot of energy and seemed to limit our creativity. Only when I started to really trust in the people and process, as I was happily surprised by how much we could deliver as a group!

Team MVP'Z

Stinky Fish + Personal Commitments

What we liked

Good to get our character “flaws” out there. Grounded us into the project and what we wanted to get out of it.

What we would do differently

We should have revisited these during the feedback sessions.

Lunch together

What we liked

It cracked open our personal shells a bit – allowing us to bond personally too. And the food was really good!

What we would do differently

Digital versions of this would be amazing for team bonding, especially during start of the pandemic.

SDI Motivational Triangle

What we liked

Really interesting to see how our team members compared in times of stress. Helped us compare the different personalities. The arrows, in particular, were a great help. Made us more aware of our future selves.

Calendar & To-Do List

What we liked

The whiteboard was our fifth teammate, keeping us on track. It helped to align our expectations of the day and the next days. The flexibility in planning on the whiteboard removed negativity of the “rigid” calendar.

Defining our culture

What we liked

This was a shorter version of the Team Canvas – we talked about “mantras” we could adhere to as a team, and possible rules following from those. Particularly the common goal of “learn the process, don’t focus only on the client” was repeated often during the project. This got us all on the same wavelengths made us feel relaxed all throughout the process.

What we would do differently

We should have revisited these during reflections to check ourselves. Mostly the first rule stuck in our head, and we forgot the rest.

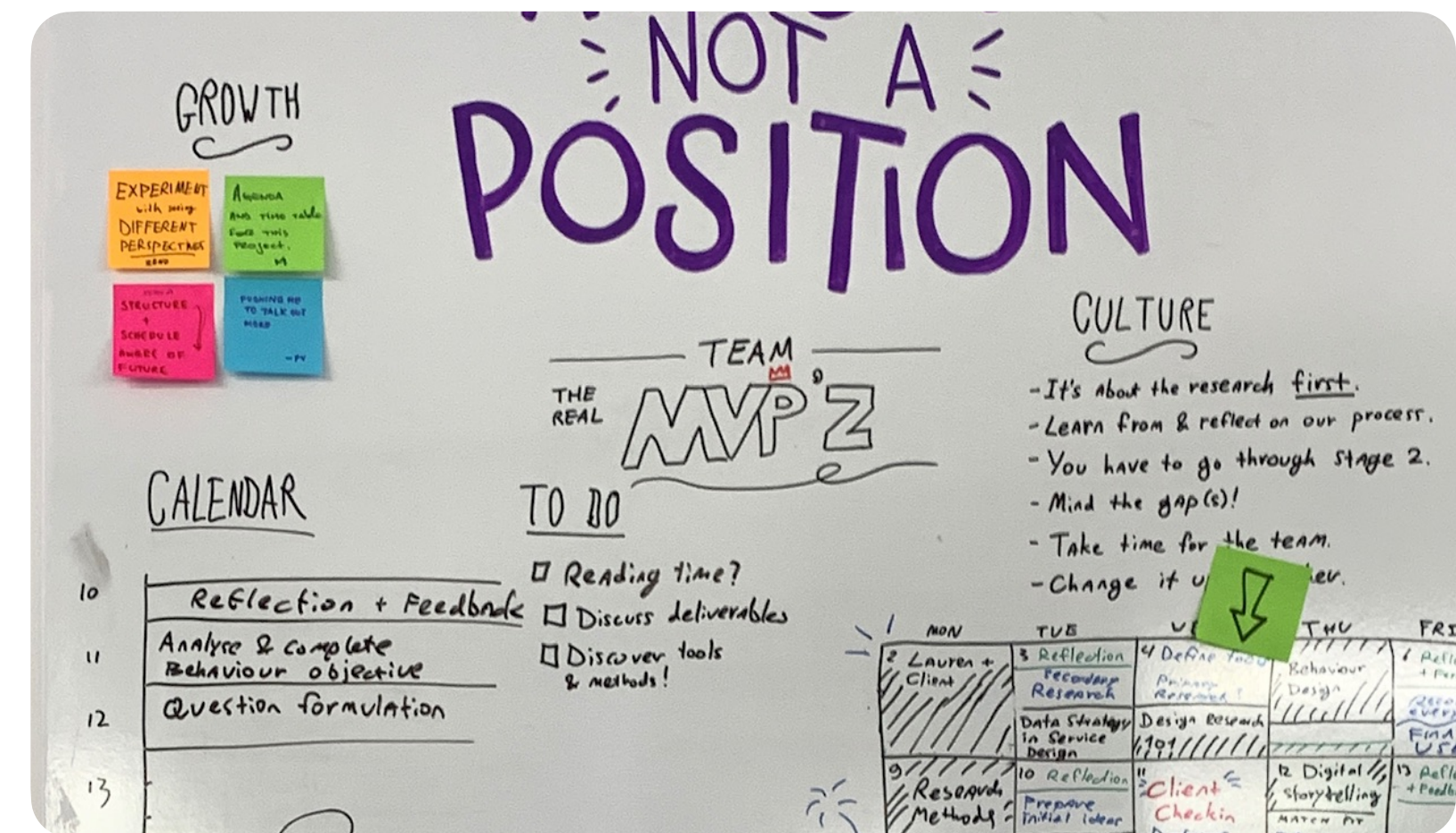
Energisers

What we liked

We did quite varied energisers! Especially the “1 minute of silence” helped tremendously on a busy day.

What we would do differently

We could’ve done more, and invented some. They could be a more consistent part of our day / our breaks.



Miro

What We Liked

It helped that everyone had their own post-it colour. It made it visible that everyone was contributing. Generating post-its from photos automatically was really cool! The mixture of photos and digital post-its made for a nice blend of mediums.

What We Would Do Differently

Our board started out super organised but got sloppy quickly. Our Retro was organised nicer.

Digital Breaks

What We Liked

Breaks were really important, especially small breaks for the online part. Turning the camera on when you’re ready to begin again was a really clear signal to start again.

What We Would Do Differently

We could have had more small breaks and focused on the energy.

Team Piña Collabra



Nora Sandman

Going into this project, my mission was to seek out and learn about effective remote working. Early on it was clear that communication, and over expressing thoughts and feelings, was essential, as a struggle in working remotely was that the lack of human contact made it hard to “read the room”. Although the new environment, I believe the team-work adapted quickly to the situation and aided one another through the concerns and struggle with early on reflections.

The team dynamic was calm and controlled, with the use of several new tools and through effective communication to eliminate unproductive discussions. The team was composed of driven people and the expectations were set high, which I feel was the reason for the satisfying outcome at the end.

Towards the end we encountered a bump, which on my part was due to the expectations in the team were not aligned, and as I personally entered the zoom call with little energy it resulted in the “red” and very dominant part of me was exposed. In the team-spirit of transparency this was resolved through the simple task of bringing the situation to surface and creating awareness.



Hannah Simpson

Going into business transformation I lacked confidence as I thought that particular module was going to be my lowest due to having no previous experience around the topic. This was going to be our first fully remote project therefore I was going into this module not knowing what to expect.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with this team, our team work was next to none and I felt supported and learnt a lot from each team member. We tackled remote working together and came out successfully at the other side. Also throughout this module I became more confident in conducting user interviews and note taking which I will take with me during my IRP.

At the beginning of this team we defined expectations and remained organised through a schedule and calendar, this really helped us to remain on track and manage time effectively.

Overall, throughout this team I felt we all displayed a high amount of trust and respect in each other which really stood throughout the process right through to our presentation at the end.



Albert Urchukov

Business transformation module happened to be the lowest point of my Hyper Journey, it was the first fully remote experience and the subject itself was too abstract for me. But psychological safety, mutual respect and the way we treated each other as a team, turned it all into a smooth, positive experience.

This team was a team driven by ‘red’ people, who exposed the whole spectrum of their ‘red’ personalities, strengths and also overdone strengths. From being forceful to domineering, from performance-driven approach to being overambitious, from ‘quick-to-act’ to ‘impatient’ these were, at least, some of my gradations. But a great team transparency, open conversations and knowledge of SDI methodology helped us stay aware, and we always took all necessary measures to return to ‘things are going well’ position as quickly as possible.

I’m really happy with the result, and also with the learnings I took away: set clear roles and expectations, grow self-awareness, have open conversations, break group thinking, mind social sensitivity when working remotely. And don’t forget to have fun along the way.



Zeno Kapitein

This project felt like a challenge to me, as Business Transformation was the topic I was most unfamiliar with. Openly sharing that uncertainty with each other made me feel more at ease, and allowed us all to explore and ask “stupid” questions along the way. Throughout the project we noticed that the move to remote made it more difficult to gauge what others were feeling, and only when someone eventually spoke up about a worry or annoyance did it turn out that everyone felt the same way.

As a result of the uncertainty with the content and the remote work, we were all quite “red” controllers. Regular reflections and team exercises like the SDI triangle gave us the vocabulary to keep the group process in check.

We combatted our inexperience with the topic & the move to remote by setting up a great amount of structure and meticulous planning. While I feel this structure helped us all be on the same page, there were moments where our structure limited us in the wild directions we could head into with the project. Coupled with the online-only experience I sometimes felt unable to come up with creative ideas, or at least take longer to develop & scrutinise those ideas.

All in all, I am seriously happy with how we worked together, our respect for each other, and the ambitious depth we managed to reach within our project.

Team Piña Collabra



Motivational Triangle

What we liked

Very good as a part of stinky fish, to surface the attitude and actions that each team-member can expose; bad & good This gave us vocabulary to deal with team unrest

What we would do differently

Identifying one's worst self in a good moment can create an illusion rather than reality

Stinky Fish

What we liked

They made it possible to talk about our fears – and (un)surprisingly it turned out that everyone felt the same uncertainty about things like the course content.

What we would do differently

We had the intention of checking up on each other's stinky fishes during reflection & feedback, but that didn't really happen amidst the normal reflection sessions.

Mural

What We Liked

Hyper Island provided us with a Mural pro account and pre-made canvases for common team building activities. Our team made extensive use of Miro, with different boards for different phases of the project. It was great that every single note was saved for us to go back to.

What We Would Do Differently

It was still quite messy. The medium stifles part of the creative process - some brainstorming was better on paper somehow

Zoom

What We Liked

Albert had a Zoom pro account which allowed meetings longer than 40 minutes – we used the breakout rooms extensively to split our team up into duos and come back. We also developed "Zoom etiquette", where having our camera off meant we were busy with an individual task, and turning it on meant we were ready to collaborate again.

What We Would Do Differently

Extensive Zooming was quite tiring, despite the energisers. We could have done more individual work and reconvened at the start/end of the day.

Reflections & Feedback

What we liked

These felt like a breath of fresh air every time we did them. It was great to hear that people were struggling with the same thing.

What we would do differently

It's difficult to voice constructive feedback in a way that feels honest, especially digitally when you can't gauge someone's reaction to it properly.

How Might We Categorisation

What we liked

We placed each of our HMW questions on a scaled from "Too narrow" to "too broad". It was nice as a prioritisation timeline, and to narrowing the number of HMW down.

What we would do differently

These categorisations were based on guesses, not data. We might have eliminated a great direction this way.

Slack

What we liked

Slack was the home of our more permanent communication. It was nice to have all messages in one place.

What we would do differently

Because of the sheer amount of messaging going on, it was easy to miss information with the many channels and threads.