

## Cohort Leader Roundtable 1

Co-design session for the  
human-centered design workshop

June 18, 2026



# Agenda

- Welcome and Framing
- HCD: How it fits for Ignition
- Participants Needs and Constraints
- Shaping the Workshop
- Next Steps and Open Discussion

A scenic view of the UMass Amherst campus. In the foreground, a concrete bridge with a metal railing spans across a calm body of water. Several people are walking across the bridge. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding buildings. In the background, a large, multi-story brick building with vertical columns stands on the left, and a modern, multi-story building is visible on the right. The sky is a clear blue with a few wispy clouds. The overall atmosphere is bright and clear.

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## Human Centered Design & How it fits into Ignition

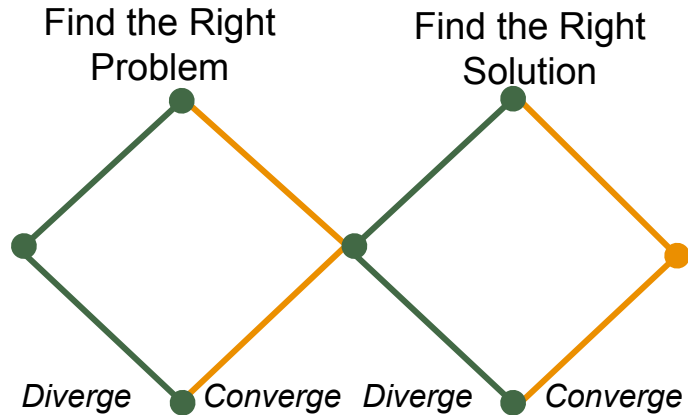
# Design Thinking

Human-Centered Design (HCD) is a systematic problem-solving approach that puts people – not technology – at the center of the design process.

- ✓ **Creative**
- ✓ **Iterative**
- ✓ **Practical**

Thinking about the people involved: what they need and what they want!

# Double Diamond?



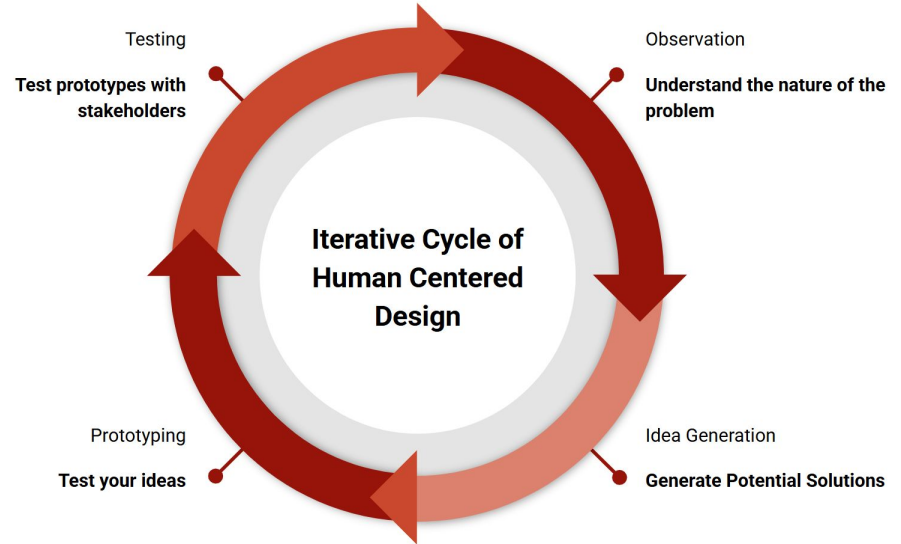
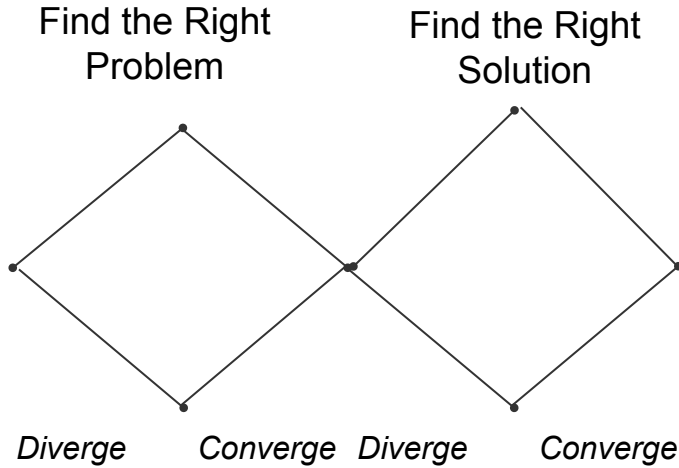
## Diverging

- Zoom out to get the whole picture
- Explore the design space
- Be creative and explore!

## Converging

- Zoom in to identify problems/solutions
- Focus in on problem/solution definition
- Time to define and be specific

# Double Diamond and the Iterative Cycle



# Why is it important to the Ignition Program

Many AI initiatives fail because they start with the technology rather than the people who will use it. Powerful AI capabilities do not guarantee adoption, trust, or impact.

- ✓ Builds solutions people actually need
- ✓ Increases adoption and engagement
- ✓ Reduces risk and creates trustworthy AI

The most successful AI products are not those with the most advanced models – they are those that solve meaningful human problems in ways people understand, trust, and adopt.

The background image shows a scenic view of the UMass Amherst campus. On the left, a tall, brick building with vertical architectural lines stands against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a modern concrete bridge with metal railings spans across a calm pond. Several people are walking across the bridge. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding trees, which have some autumn-colored foliage. The overall atmosphere is bright and clear.

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**Working towards your pain points!**

# Activity

Using an HCD mindset, let's put AI or technology aside for now and focus on the problems.

Take 5 minutes to write down the top 3 pain points you're experiencing in your work or organization right now. Use the Google doc below and add your points in your respective tabs.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YEghQIGRz1DgZwbj5mhWQMKQvRAM\\_U7wX8WrYQ6Cmu0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YEghQIGRz1DgZwbj5mhWQMKQvRAM_U7wX8WrYQ6Cmu0/edit?usp=sharing)

## Discussion

- What problems did you identify?
- What solutions have been tried in the past?
- Why is this a hard problem to solve?

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YEghQIGRz1DgZwbj5mhWQMKQvRAM\\_U7wX8WrYQ6Cmu0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YEghQIGRz1DgZwbj5mhWQMKQvRAM_U7wX8WrYQ6Cmu0/edit?usp=sharing)

## AI excels at...

- Augmented web search
- Search, summarizing, or comparing documents, including beagle able to “ask questions” of documents
- Photo and video editing
- Long form web searching to create a document/documents for specific purposes
- Writing code which addresses a specific issue or problem

Look at the problems you identified. Which problems do you think AI would be a tool that could be leveraged to address the problem?

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## Shaping the workshop

## What kind of workshop would help your organization?

First, can we answer any questions or provide more clarification of HCD? We will go into a much deeper dive in the workshop!

For today:

- What should a 1-day HCD workshop include?
- How can this workshop build on your team's participation in the Ignition program?

# Activity

What outcomes are important to you?

In the same google doc (linked below and in the chat) list ~3 outcomes you would like for your team for this workshop.

After this workshop, I would like my team to be able to \_\_\_\_\_.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YEghQIGRz1DgZwbj5mhWQMKQvRAM\\_U7wX8WrYQ6Cmu0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YEghQIGRz1DgZwbj5mhWQMKQvRAM_U7wX8WrYQ6Cmu0/edit?usp=sharing)

## Next Steps

- Based on this meeting, we will set the agenda for the July workshops and share with the team leads in the next 2 weeks.
- You will be able to provide feedback asynchronously.
- You can always email us directly with questions and comments at
  - [enutwell@umass.edu](mailto:enutwell@umass.edu)
  - [dymehta@umass.edu](mailto:dymehta@umass.edu)

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