



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers



MINDSET FOR TEACHERS AS DESIGNERS



Co-funded by
the European Union

HOW TO USE THESE CARDS

The cards are divided into three categories:

- **Learning cards**
- **Challenge cards**
- **Further learning cards**

Learning cards: these cards will allow you to familiarise with the concept of teacher as designer mindsets, and the five design mindsets you will need to develop. They will contain definitions and traits of each mindset.

Go through these cards at your own pace!

Challenges cards: these cards are meant to provide you with different types of practical activities and exercises that you can challenge yourself with in order to start developing each mindset and put your new knowledge to the test.

You can use these cards on your own or challenge a co-learner to do them with you!

Further learning cards: these cards are for you to delve deeper into the knowledge of the mindsets. You will find further information, useful links and more.

Once you have used the cards and completed challenges, you will be asked to share your experience with other teachers.

Let's get started!

DESIGN



A problem-solving process that involves conscious and explicit implementation of actions to change and improve a real issue in a specific context, drawing on personal and collective knowledge and practical experience of designing.



Co-funded by
the European Union

MINDSET



A mindset refers to a person's underlying values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and perceptions that shape their thinking, behaviors and actions. It includes the way a person views themselves, others, and the world around them. A set of mindsets influence how people interpret and respond to challenges and opportunities in their professional and private life.

Groeger, L., Schweitzer, J., Sobel, L., & Malcolm (2019), "Design Thinking Mindset: Developing Creative Confidence".



Co-funded by
the European Union

TEACHERS AS DESIGNERS



Teacher as designer refers to the idea that teachers approach educational challenges using methodologies, tools and mindsets from the design field. In this understanding the teachers have a critical role in designing and shaping the learning experiences of their students. Furthermore, teachers consciously apply design mindsets to approach their everyday activities and challenges.

Camacho, H., Dirckinck-Holmfeld, L., & Tabo, G. O. (2023), "How to support teachers in becoming teachers as designers of student-centred approaches".



Co-funded by
the European Union



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers



LEARNING CARDS



Co-funded by
the European Union



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

EMPATHY

Do you understand others' behaviors, needs, dreams, values and actions?

A teacher with this mindset is driven by the desire to understand learners' behaviors, needs, values, actions to create solutions that respond to their needs and their context. Teachers have the ability to see themselves in learners or other stakeholders' shoes (including their colleagues) to recognize why they do what they do.

TRAITS

- They are very aware of not falling into the mistake of designing for themselves, they make a conscious effort to understand for whom they are designing
- They have the wish to deeply understand others' (students, colleagues and other stakeholders) experiences.
- They know how to listen and observe.



Co-funded by
the European Union



**Note down (there is a card like this
after each mindset)**

your understanding of this mindset:

experience with it:



COLLABORATION, OPENNESS AND DIVERSITY



Sharing and co-constructing knowledge with diversity of perspectives, expertise talents, knowledge and experiences

This mindset embodies a profound appreciation for the power of collective wisdom and a genuine willingness to embrace various viewpoints, insights, and perspectives. Teachers adopting this mindset recognize that the design process thrives better when diverse ideas, expertise, experiences, and talents are allowed; and that design cannot be done as solo effort.

TRAITS

- They have high levels of curiosity and interest in seeking others' ideas and insights and collaborations
- They are capable of multi-inter-cross disciplinary collaboration
- Teachers have the capacity to accept and embrace new and unusual ideas and methods.





EXPERIMENTATION AND VISUAL THINKING



Convert concepts into testable prototypes and try them out

This mindset is characterized by the need and ability to make tangible what is not, to bring ideas to life, to make the abstract explicit and envision possibilities. The visual thinking mindset includes the use of metaphors and storytelling and the experimentation, embraces both divergent and convergent ways of thinking and the iterative cycle of creating and testing.

TRAITS

- They construct quick prototypes/sketches to seek feedback and re-working solutions quickly
- They are action oriented – get out there in the real word and engage with students or colleagues to test ideas
- Share knowledge and ideas using visualization tools in order to better communicate and clarify what they have in mind.





UNCERTAINTY, AMBIGUITY AND RISK

We know that there is not a roadmap

This mindset refers to the ability to move on with the design process knowing that there are not right answers or not having a complete knowledge or certainty about the outcome or the solution. Teachers with this mindset embrace uncertainty and ambiguity as they know that leaving doors open, considering imprecise solutions, and not knowing what the outcome could be, is part of the creative process.

TRAITS

- They recognize that there is not a single right answer and that moving openly triggers creativity
- They feel comfortable with scenarios that lack clear definitions and straightforward solutions
- Teachers acknowledge that educational challenges are unpredictable and that they should get into ambiguous and complex territories and try to get the best solutions possible.





REFRAMING CHALLENGES

Reframe educational challenges as design challenges

Teachers using this mindset apply critical questioning to deconstruct and reframe initial problems statements. Moreover, these teachers approach problem solving with a holistic perspective, recognizing the intricate web of relationships between the problem, its surrounding environment, and various stakeholders.

TRAITS

- They frame the problem to initiate the process to find possible solutions
- They use critical questions to uncover underlying issues and identify opportunities for improvement.
- They analyze problems within the larger framework of their educational environment.





Mindset for Teachers
as Designers



CHALLENGE CARDS



Co-funded by
the European Union



EMPATHY



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

TIME NEEDED: 20-30 MIN.

GOAL

Learning to identify “emphatic situations”, different feelings and behaviors of students and how teacher colleague is handling the different situations in a classroom.

PREPARATION

Find a colleague who is willing to help you to do this exercise. Explain the background and why you are doing the observation. Agree when you could be observing the lesson. Prepare yourself with what you want to observe. You might want to observe: classroom organization, delivery of instruction, interaction with individual students and the class as a whole, etc.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Shortly introduce yourself to the students and explain why you are joining the lesson.

STEP 2: Follow the lesson and take notes of the elements that you have decided to observe.

STEP 3: After the lesson reflect the observations together with your teacher colleague.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from this empathy exercise?



Co-funded by
the European Union



EMPATHY



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

LEARN EMOTIONAL STATES OF YOUR STUDENTS

TIME NEEDED: 20-30 MIN.

GOAL

Learn yourself how to recognise and be aware of different emotional states of your students. (frustration, sadness, happiness, enthusiasm, disappointment, tenseness...) Please observe especially verbal (words, tone) and non-verbal (body language) signals of your students.

PREPARATION

Prepare with pen and paper for notes and self reflection (if you feel so). Try to think beforehand about what kind of signals, verbal or non-verbal, you especially want to identify.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Run the lesson normally and write notes (if possible) about the emotions and emotional signals and behavior you recognise in the class room.

STEP 2: After the lesson write down your observations, do self reflection and share with your teacher colleague if possible.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from this empathy exercise?



Co-funded by
the European Union



Note down your experience



COLLABORATION



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

ROLE PLAY - DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

TIME NEEDED: 20-30 MIN.

GOAL

To learn the value of collaboration and different perspectives.

PREPARATION

In this exercise you identify a current challenges that you are facing in your school. You need paper and a pen/pencil

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Write down your perspective on the challenge. This includes your thoughts, feelings, and potential solutions from your viewpoint.

STEP 2: Create a mind map of other people affected by this challenge (students, other teachers, leadership, parents, etc.).

STEP 3: Assume the role of one of these stakeholders and consider how their perspective might differ from your own. Write down your thoughts and feelings as if you were viewing the challenge from their viewpoint.

STEP 4: Reflect on the insights gained from seeing the challenge through a different lens.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from this exercise? Any new perspective was revealed?



Co-funded by
the European Union



COLLABORATION



DEEPEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT YOUR COLLEAGUES

GOAL

TIME NEEDED: 20-30 MIN.

To improve your collaboration by creating trust with your colleagues. Mutual trust increases when you know people "as a whole" and not only narrowly through work.

PREPARATION

Gather together to get to know each other. Gather a group of people (5-7) from your colleagues or people you work with daily or weekly basis at your workplace. Take with you papers and pens (many colors) and share the materials with your colleagues when starting the challenge.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Ask everybody draw or paint a picture describing the one thing that makes them "tick" outside working life. What do they do that is important / motivates them?

STEP 2: Everybody shares their own ticking activity/activities. When and why they started, how they do it and what it means to them?

STEP 3: After everyone has shared own activity, thank people for sharing something special and personal to colleagues.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from this exercise?



Co-funded by
the European Union



Note down your experience



EXPERIMENTATION AND VISUAL THINKING



DESIGN A WALLET*

TIME NEEDED: 40 MIN.

GOAL

To learn the value of prototyping and iterative design process.

PREPARATION

In this exercise you need paper, pen, cardboard, glue, scissors, sticks etc. to make physical wallet. You need another person to represent “a client” who has the need for a wallet.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: You first need to ask your client to show their wallet, ask some questions to discover needs and desires, observe about what they have in the wallet and why.

STEP 2: Make a prototype of a wallet for them. Present the Prototype and get feedback.

STEP 3: Make the second prototype on the basis of the feedback.

STEP 4: Present the prototype and ask feedback. How well did you succeed?

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from the iterative prototyping process?

*Based on “The Wallet Project” from Stanford University’s d.school



Co-funded by
the European Union



EXPERIMENTATION AND VISUAL THINKING



THE CRAZY 8*

GOAL

To learn the value of prototyping and iterative design process.

TIME NEEDED: 25 MIN.

PREPARATION

Get together with 3 or more colleagues or friends. Each participant needs A4 paper and a pen. Set a specific design challenge or problem statement that you want to brainstorm solutions for. This could be related to your teaching practice, a classroom activity, or an educational initiative.

PROCESS: You are asked to quickly sketch 8 ideas within 8 minutes, with the intention being that by constraining the amount of time you have, there isn't enough time for people to second-guess their ideas, or worry about them being "perfect".

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Draw 8 boxes on a piece of paper. Set a timer for 8 minutes.

STEP 2: Sketch 1 quick idea per minute. When the timer rings, stop sketching.

STEP 3: Quickly share the ideas generated and identify which ideas could actually be workable. You can vote to select the workable ideas.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from the iterative prototyping process?

* from Design Sprint Kit core method



Co-funded by
the European Union



Note down your experience



UNCERTAINTY, AMBIGUITY, AND RISK



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE AND CONCERN

TIME NEEDED: 30 MIN.

GOAL

Lerning how to make clarity in uncertain situations, to understand what you have influence on and take action.

PREPARATION

You need a flipchart, markers, post-it notes, paper and pens.

PROCESS: Think of a issue/concern/challenge you want to make sense of. You can agree on it with a group.

STEP 1: Draw a circle on the flipchart and have them brainstorm all the areas of concern for the current issue.

STEP 2: Take a new flipchart paper and draw the circle of influence in the middle. Referring to the first circle, write down things that are in their sphere of influence – can control or influence – and those things that are not.

STEP 3: If someone is saying “I can’t do anything about that?”, challenge that thinking to see if there is any room to expand the sphere of influence: “What would need to happen for that to change?”

STEP 4: Once it is clear what is outside the sphere of influence and control – help them understand that there is no value in spending time worrying about them. It is time to put them to one side and ‘let them go’.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What are your key learnings from this exercise?

In what kind of situations you would benefit from this exercise?



Co-funded by
the European Union



UNCERTAINTY, AMBIGUITY, AND RISK



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

SLEEP OVER THE PROBLEM

TIME NEEDED: 1 HOUR

GOAL

To learn how to make clarity in the uncertain situations, and how to keep the thinking process “open” in your mind dedicating time for reflection when solving a difficult situations.

PREPARATION

Identify a specific problem or challenge you are facing in your professional or personal life.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Analyze the problem, then brainstorm and come up with an initial solution to address it.

STEP 2: Keep the solution on hold for 24 hours

STEP 3: During these 24 hours, continue thinking about the problem and generating additional ideas and solutions. Explore alternative approaches, think outside the box, etc. Take notes of new ideas.

Step 4: After the 24-hour period, review and evaluate the initial solution and any additional ideas generated during the extended ideation. Then generate a final solution: is it different from the initial one?

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What are your key learnings from this exercise? In what kind of situations you would benefit from this exercise?



Co-funded by
the European Union



Note down your experience



REFRAMING CHALLENGES



THE 5 WHY EXERCISE

TIME NEEDED: 45 MIN

GOAL

To identify the root cause of a problem by asking “why” repeatedly.

PREPARATION

Find 3 or more people to do this exercise with. Be prepared with a problem statement. It can be something you are currently facing, or that has happened in the past. Let your team know that in this exercise you'll be digging deep to get to the root cause of the problem.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Brainstorming phase: Why did this xx happen?

STEP 2: Choose one of the answers and start to deep dive with next “why” questions and create next “problem statements”.

STEP 3: Repeat the process 3-4 times to deep dive and find the “root cause”.

STEP 4: Propose a problem statement from the team to the “root cause”.

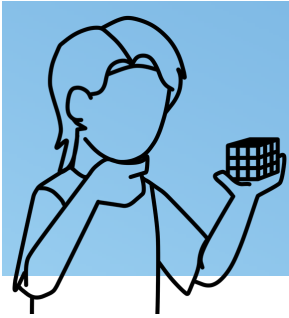
JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from this exercise?

In what kind of situations this type of thinking would be beneficial for you?



Co-funded by
the European Union



REFRAMING CHALLENGES



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

“How might we...?”

TIME NEEDED: 30 MIN

GOAL

“How might we...” questions are helpful for moving from challenges to new ideas and possibilities.

PREPARATION

Explain to participants that HMW questions reframe problems to stimulate creative solutions, fostering innovation even in uninspiring situations. By shifting focus to potential solutions, HMW questions encourage diverse thinking within teams, facilitating the generation of creative ideas to address challenges.

STEP BY STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1: Give participants some real-life challenges

STEP 2: Ask participants to generate “how might we” questions for 5-10 min. Encourage them to come up with as many HMW questions as they can in the given time frame.

Example: “How might we connect learning with play?”

STEP 3: When everyone is ready, let each participant read their questions out loud.

STEP 4: Ask everyone to vote on the How Might We questions that are most inspiring and interesting. Pick the best ones and start ideation.

JOURNALING AND SHARING

What did you learn from this exercise?

When and in what kind of situations you would use this?



Co-funded by
the European Union



Note down your experience



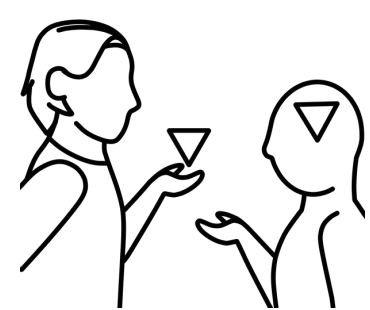
Mindset for Teachers
as Designers



FURTHER LEARNING CARDS



Co-funded by
the European Union



EMPATHY



Mindset for Teachers
as Designers

Take different perspectives

- Ask yourself a set of questions before teaching a class. Could the content be sensitive? Could it offend anyone? How can you react to students' behavior during the class? The aim is to take into consideration your students' feelings and experiences to understand their behavior.

Community Engagement Activities

- Get involved in community service or community engagement activities. This can provide a broader understanding of the challenges students may face outside the classroom.

Keep a reflective journal

- Keep a reflective journal where you can document your experiences, challenges, and successes. Reflecting on personal experiences can enhance self-awareness and empathy.



Co-funded by
the European Union



COLLABORATION



Get open to a new perspective

- You might know a friend, colleague or somebody who is from another field (professionally speaking), invite that person to drink a cup of coffee and have a talk about how to design one of your classes.

Student's feedback

- Teach a class to your students and ask them to anonymously leave feedback on a post it (you can also have specific questions to guide the feedback). This will help you be open to change and tailor your teaching to your students better.

Cross-disciplinary projects

- Plan a class in which you integrate elements from multiple subjects, using innovative teaching tools as well. This will encourage you to think creatively, explore connections with colleagues from other fields.





EXPERIMENTATION AND VISUAL THINKING



Flipped Classroom experiments

- Experiment with the flipped classroom model. In this approach, the traditional lecture and homework are reversed. You can record lectures for your students to watch at home, allowing class time for interactive activities and discussions.

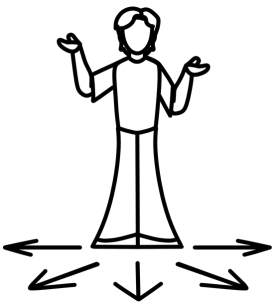
Brainstorming sessions

- Organize brainstorming sessions where individually or with other colleagues you can generate and share creative ideas related to curriculum development, teaching methods, and classroom activities.

Creative workshop

- Dive in a creative and design thinking workshop with colleagues. You can use these thinking approaches to face challenges in the classroom, fostering the use of a user-centered, creative mindset, focusing on creative solutions and collaborative problem-solving.





UNCERTAINTY, AMBIGUITY AND RISK



Scenario planning workshop

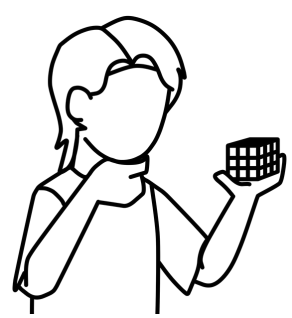
- Get with colleagues and envision possible future scenarios in education. Discuss how you might face them. This helps acknowledge the risk and uncertainty, prepare and plan strategically to overcome these potential challenges.

Mock crisis simulations

- Organize a simulation of unexpected events or crises that teachers might face in the classroom and develop a strategy to deal with them. This will help you develop the ability to adapt quickly to unforeseen circumstances and find on-the-spot solutions.

Learning from failure

- Get together with your colleague and encourage them to share instances in which a lesson or approach didn't go as they had planned it and discuss how they faced that uncertainty and what they learned.



REFRAMING CHALLENGES

Mind Mapping

- When you find yourself faced with a teaching challenge, try creating a mind map. Start with the central issue and branch out with various solutions or approaches. Explore unconventional or unexpected ideas too. This exercise encourages thinking from different angles and reframing the problem by considering diverse solutions.

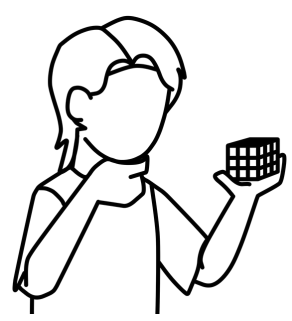
Reframing method

- Use the problem reframing method for an issue you have encountered with your class. The aim is to change the perspective from which you have look at the problem (*Check the back of the card for the resource on the problem reframing method).

Find outside the box solutions

- Think about a problem, simple or complicated, and come up with very crazy outside the box solutions. Did you gain a new perspective?





Note down your experience
