



National Opportunity Youth Incubator: Session 2

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Warm Welcome

- **Name**
- **Name Of Your Organization**
- **City and State You Reside**
- **Fist to 5**



Speakers

Brian Rubin
Kandace Kramer
Kristina Cola
Franklin Zuniga
Ania Hodges



AGENDA

- **Warm Up Activity**
- **Speaker 1: Brian Rubin**
- **Break Time**
- **Speaker 2: Kandace Kramer**
- **Engaging Activity**
- **Speaker 3: Kristina Cola, Franklin Zuniga, and Ania Hodges**
- **Closing Comments, Optimistic Closing, and Surveys**

WARM UP ACTIVITY

- **Kristina: will lead us in a quick breathing exercise**
- **Franklin: will lead us in a quick stretching exercise**

Brian Rubin

Education Design Lab

Senior Education Designer



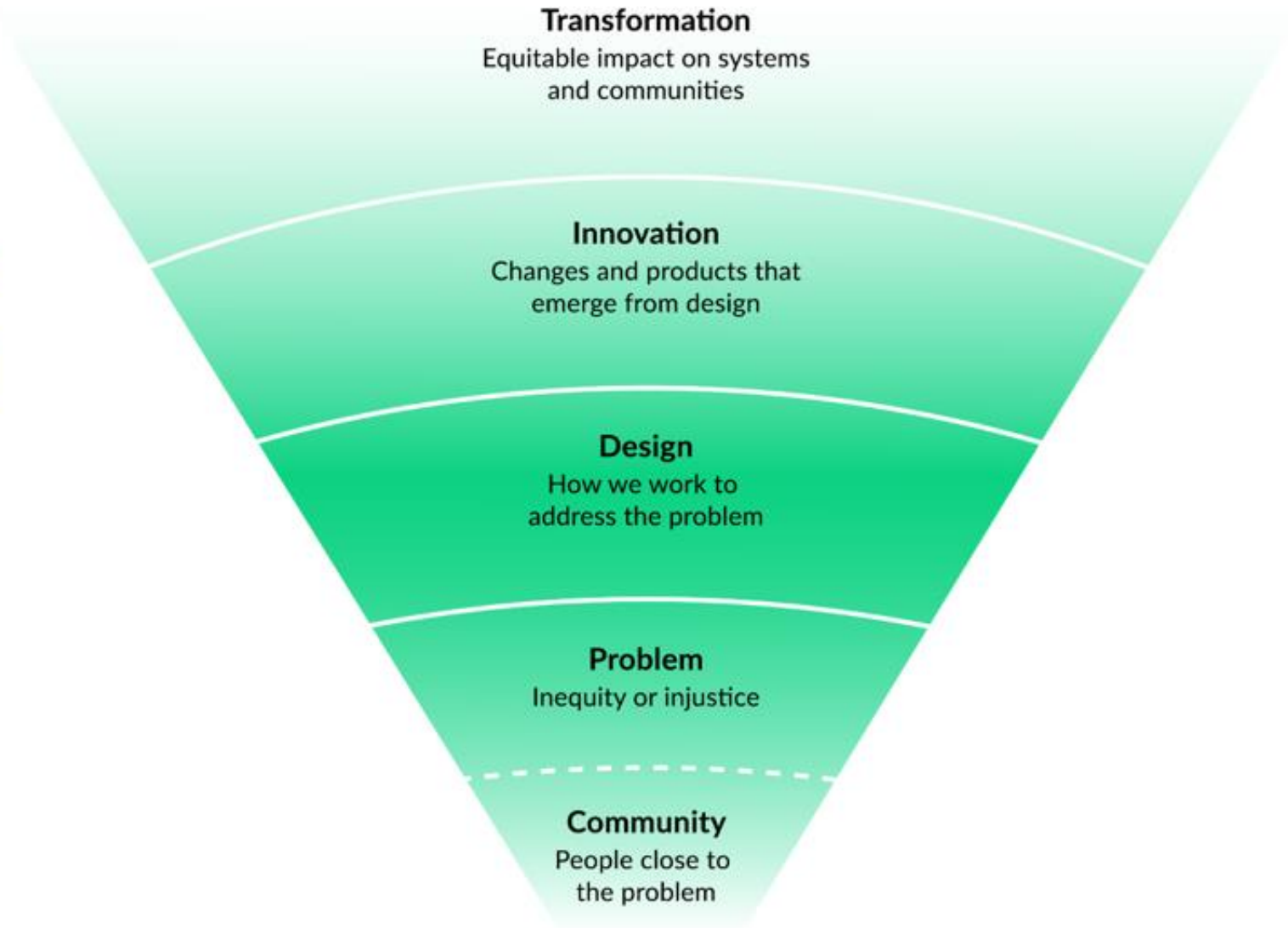
Co-Designing with Opportunity Youth

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Education Design Lab & Big Thought

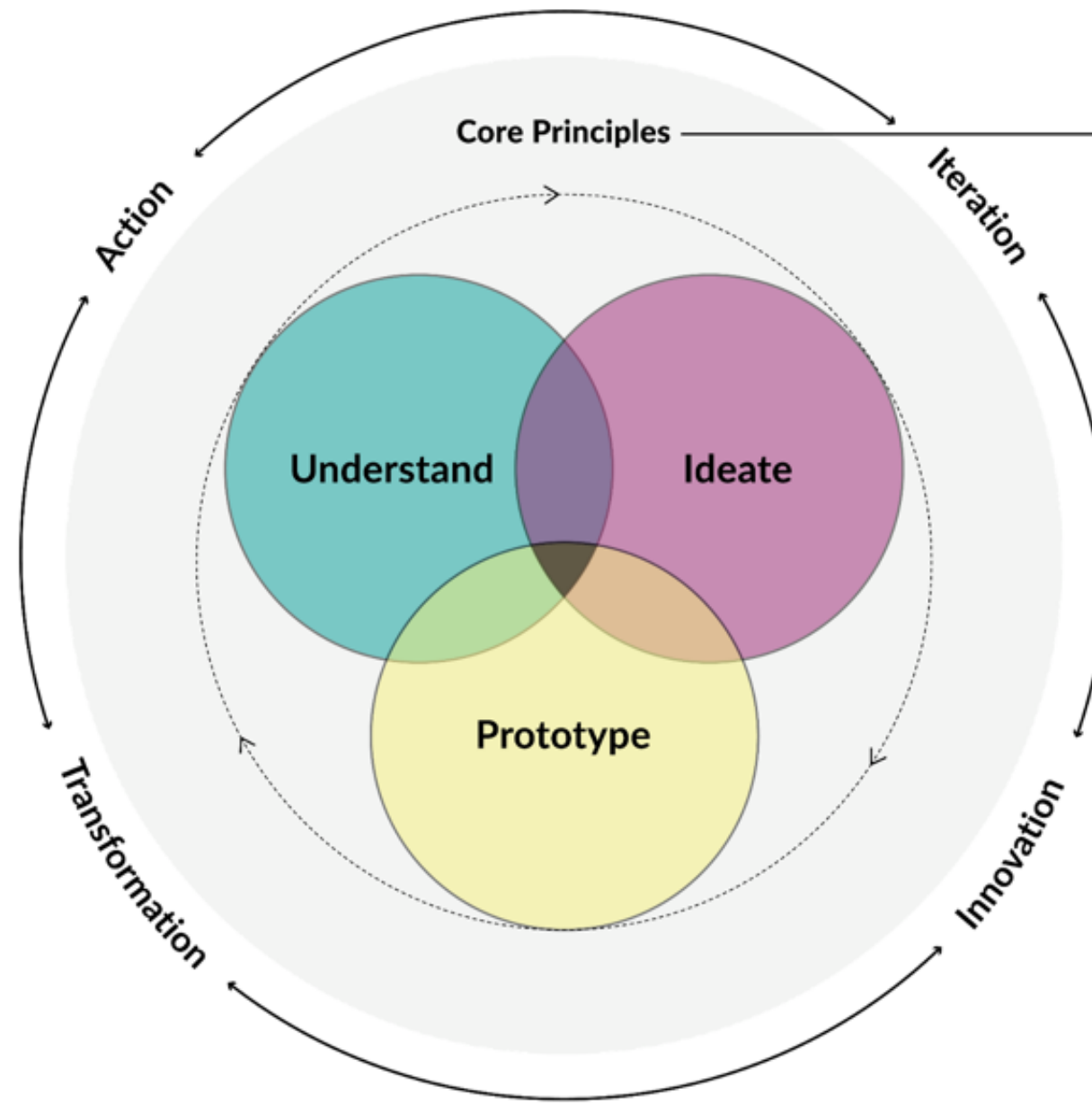
We use the power of design to transform how we learn + work.

Transformation is only possible if we ground ourselves in the problem and collaborate with people closest to the problem.



The Lab's Approach to Design

The Lab's design approach guides us to work intentionally across these three modes of design. The way we operate within each design mode is shaped by core principles that come from the [equityXdesign framework](#) (created by Caroline Hill, Michelle Molitor, Christine Ortiz) and the [Lab's engagement framework](#) (based on [Self-Determination Theory](#)).

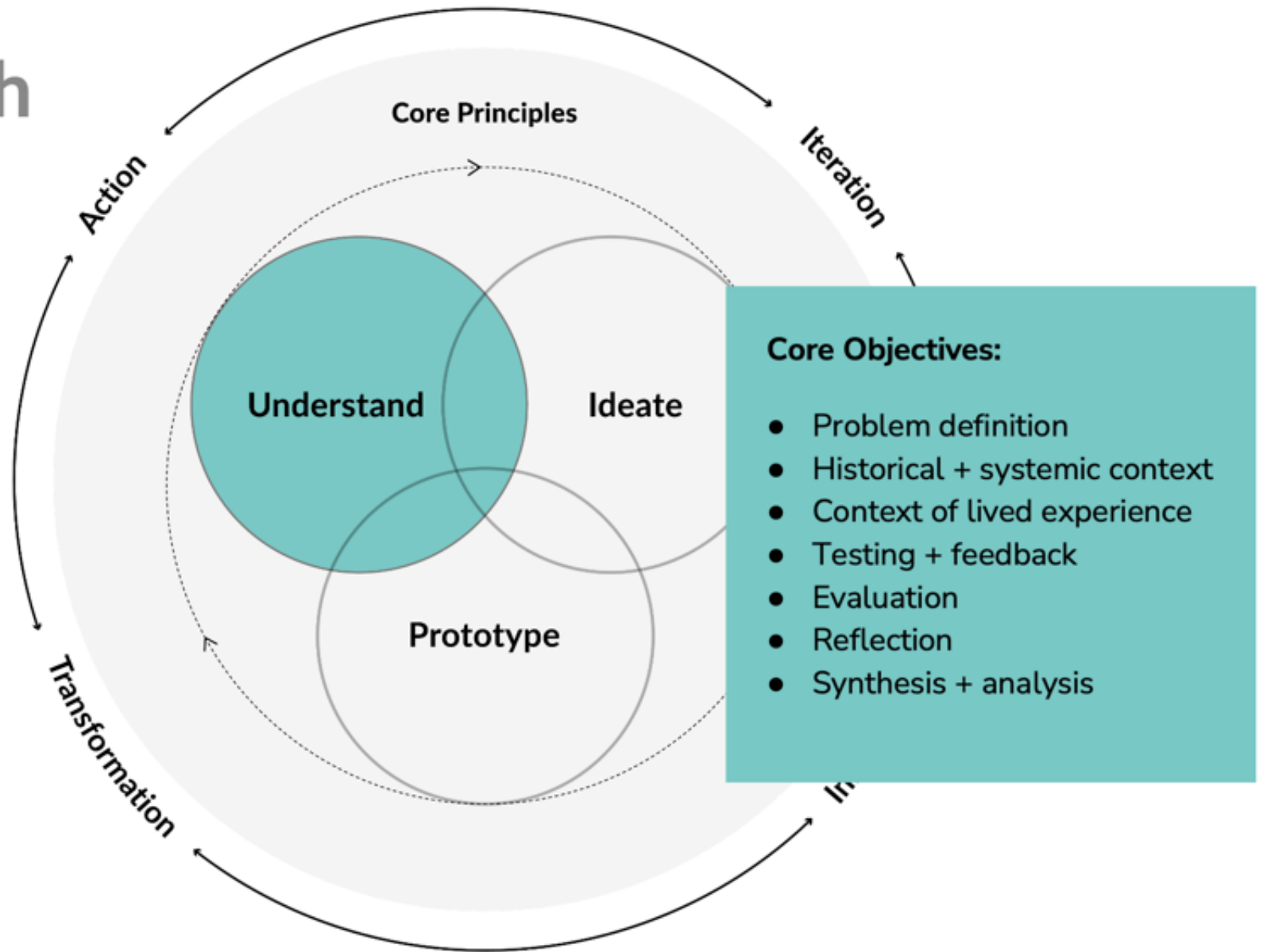


- Process as product
- Historical + systemic context
- Inclusive collaboration
- Growth, belonging, agency

The Lab's Approach to Design: Understand

Working in the *understand* mode means that we're actively defining problems, learning about the experiences of people closest to these problems, and reflecting on how systems and environments have been designed to shape these experiences. Reflecting on our own relationship to these problems is critical.

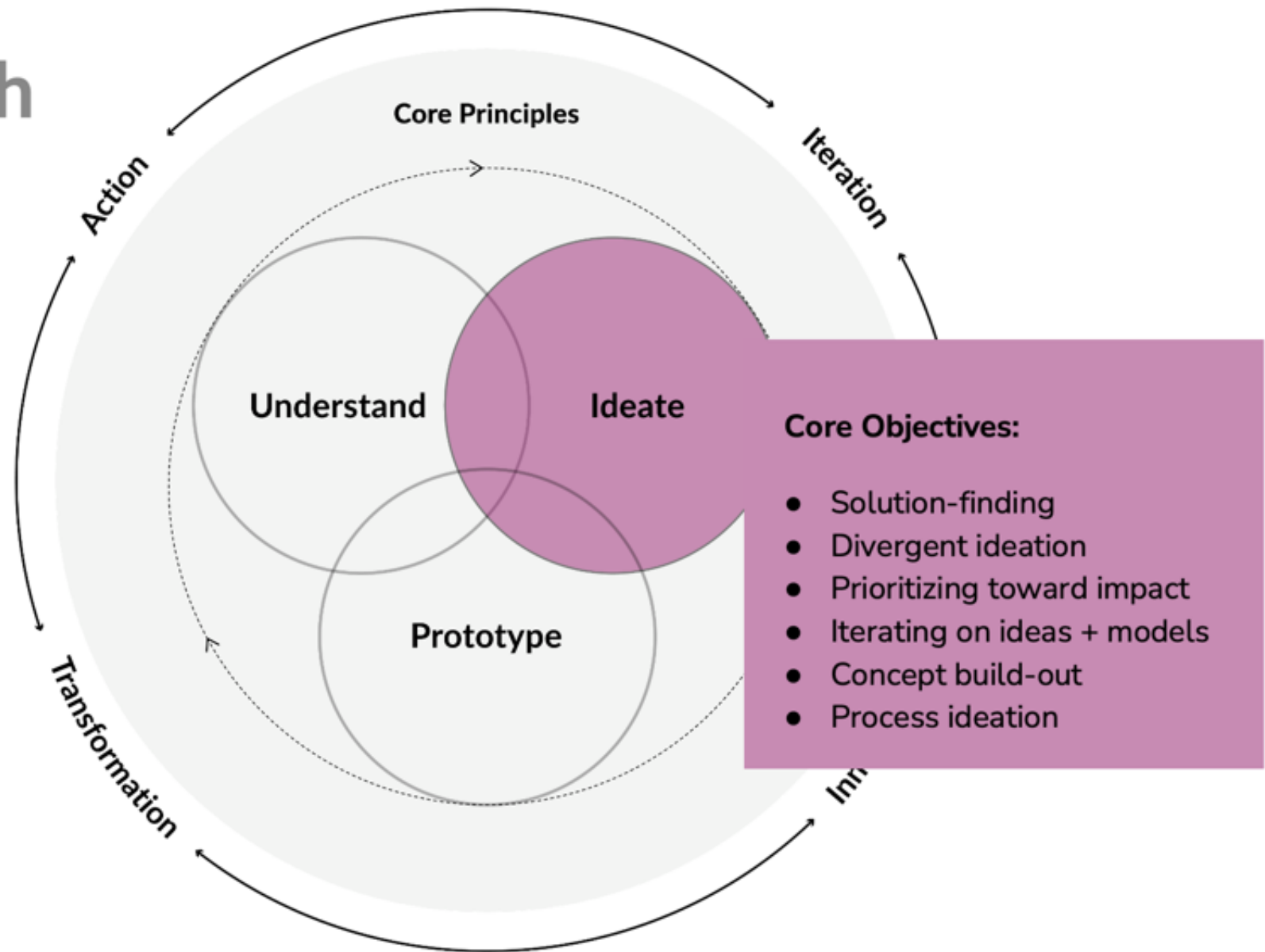
Understand means that we're asking questions, reflecting, listening, and learning.



The Lab's Approach to Design: Ideate

Working in the *ideate* mode means that we're opening our minds to new possible futures as we brainstorm and build on ideas and inspiration from others with different experiences, perspectives, contexts. It is critical that we lead with solutions that those most deeply impacted by the problem have found or created for themselves.

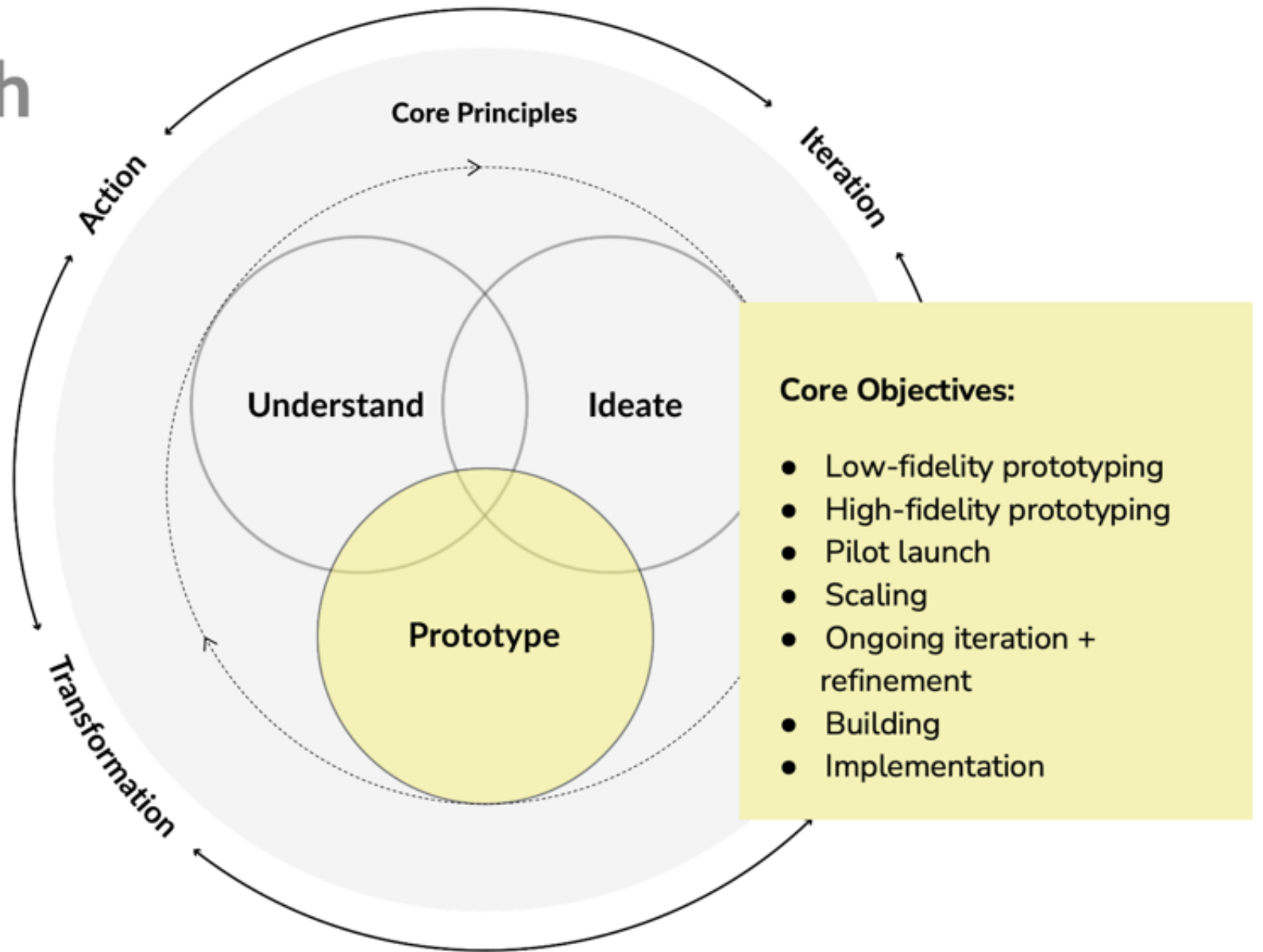
Ideation means that we're imagining, visioning, playing, and pushing beyond what exists today.



The Lab's Approach to Design: Prototype

Working in the *prototype* mode means that we're creating testable versions of ideas and gathering feedback on these from key stakeholders, especially those most deeply impacted by the problem. This enables ongoing iteration toward innovation and transformation.

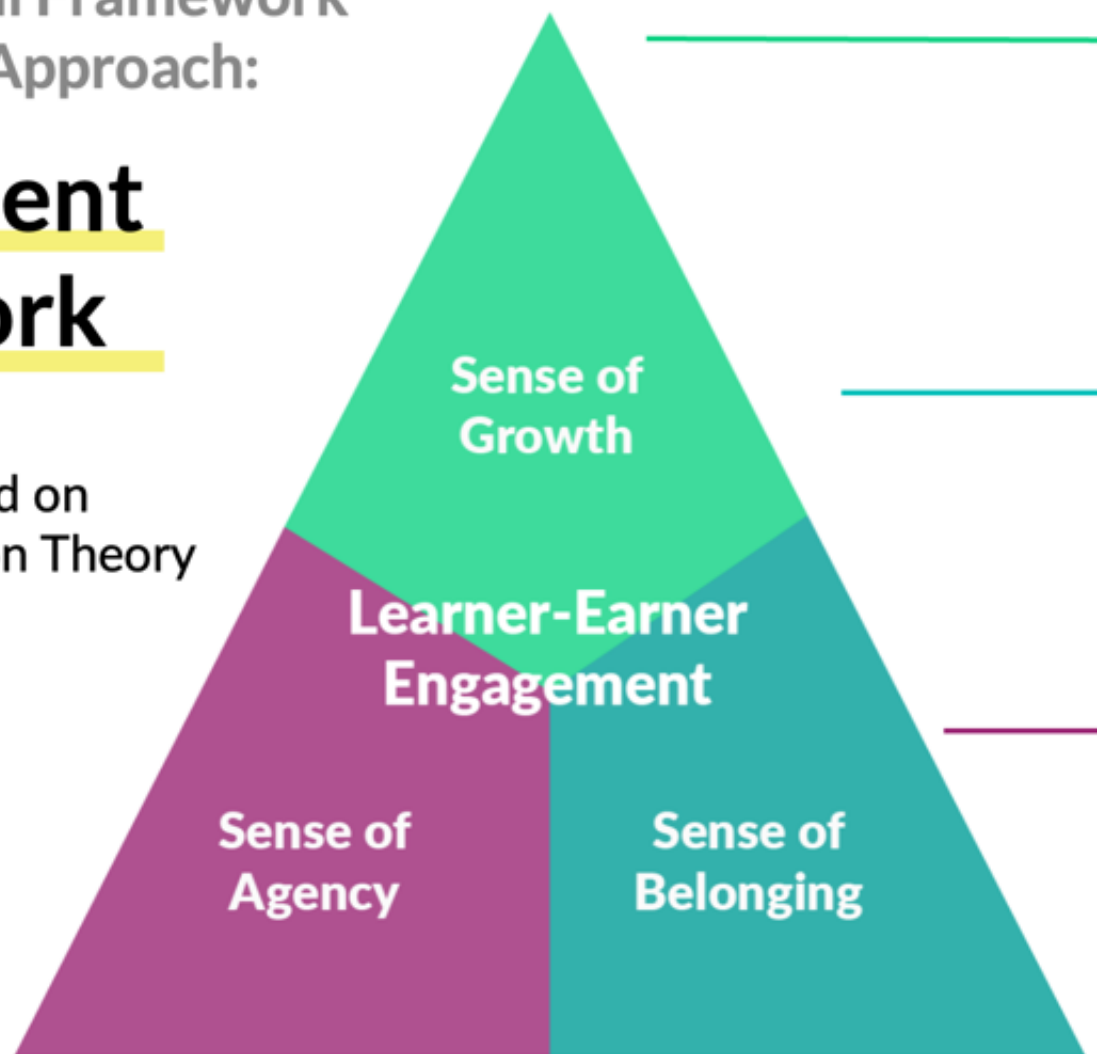
Prototyping means we're creating, building, implementing, and iterating toward impact.



A Foundational Framework
of our Design Approach:

Engagement Framework

Three drivers of
engagement based on
Self-Determination Theory



Growth

The learning/work environment must help people see how they are growing, show them they are capable of success, and help them progress toward their goals.

Belonging

The learner-earner must feel a sense of belonging, connection to, and support from their community in being their authentic self.

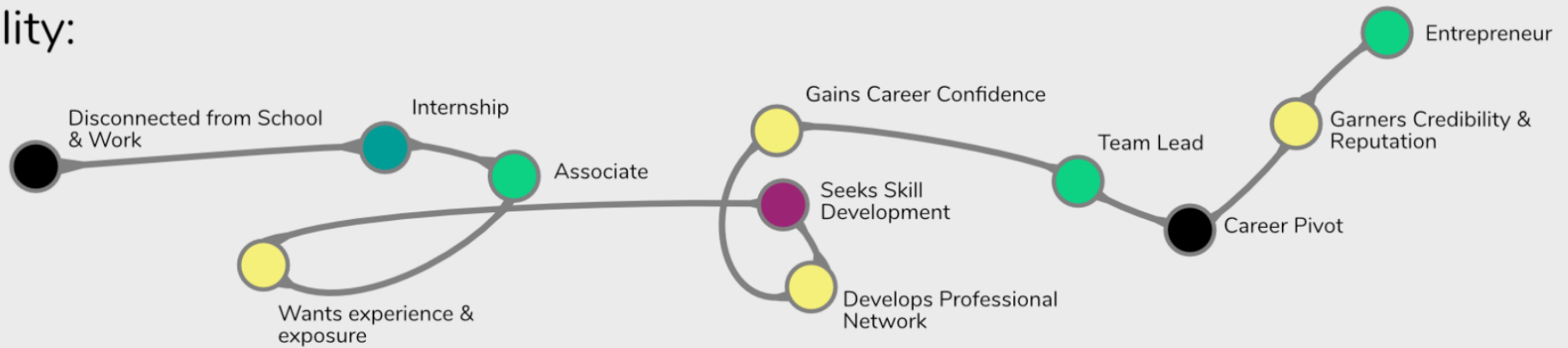
Agency

The learner-earner must feel like they're in the driver's seat, with opportunities to make meaningful choices about their learning/work experience; their environment needs to align with their individual goals, life experiences, and interests.

The way people think it looks:



The Reality:



The Education Design Lab co-designs
transformative solutions for the learn+work
ecosystem that center the learner-earner,
resulting in increased access to economic
opportunity.

Big Thought's Community Action Team (CAT) provides civic engagement opportunities, career and advising workshops, relationship-building experiences, and resources to youth who are currently participating in Big Thought programs or are program alumni.

Together we set out to co-design retail tech pathways by elevating the lived experiences of opportunity youth—ensuring their voices shaped design decisions from the beginning.

Together we explored:

- **Knowledge of roles**
- **Perceived skill gaps**
- **Necessary supports**
- **Mindset shifts**
- **Competencies**

Why Co-Designing with Youth Mattered

- **Youth seek mutual respect and real opportunity**
- **They want programs that honor their realities**
- **What we heard:**
 - **“We’ll go the extra mile if you go the extra mile.”**
 - **“Respect that I do come with skills.”**
- **Co-design fostered trust, relevance, and shared ownership**

QUESTIONS FOR BRIAN

BREAK TIME

Kandace Kramer

Walmart

Market People Partner



Fast Facts!

- Walmart was founded in 1962 by Sam Walton
- Walmart currently is operating in over 20 countries (including Mexico, Chile, China, and Canada) in 10,000 locations globally
- Walmart employs over 2.1 million associates worldwide; largest private employer in the world
- 51% of the US workforce identifies as people of color and 52% of the workforce are women
- 75% of salaried managers began their career with Walmart as hourly associates
- Motto: "Save Money. Live Better." & "People-Led. Tech-Powered."



Actively live our values, providing opportunity for associates to grow and belong

Delightful experiences, intelligent operations, and enabling the future through innovation

Serve our customers and members with the things they want, when and how they want them

We are a people-led, tech-powered omnichannel retailer dedicated to helping people save money and live better.

Commitment to everyday low price

Time savings, health and wellness, financial tools and actions that strengthen people, communities and the planet

Make **Walmart** the **BEST** place to **SHOP** and **WORK**.

We will...help **CUSTOMERS**
Save Money and Live Better!



By...activating our 1.3M **ASSOCIATES**
to have an owner's mindset!



Our Core Values and Behaviors

Respect the individual

- Builds high-performing teams
- Builds strong and trusting relationships with team members and business partners
- Creates a focus around developing talent through feedback, coaching, mentoring and development opportunities

Serve our customers

- Delivers results with a customer-first approach, using omni-merchant mindset, EDLP, and EDLC models.
- Considers data, analytics, customer insights, and business aspects in planning and execution.

Act with Integrity

- Maintains and promotes the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and compliance, models the Walmart values to support and foster our culture.
- Acts as a servant leader, consistently demonstrating humility, self-awareness, honesty, and transparency.

Strive for Excellence

- Shows curiosity and growth mindset by seeking feedback, asking questions, and learning from mistakes.
- Drives improvement, supports digital disruption, uses new tools and technology, and challenges the status quo while aiding others through change.



Work at Walmart. Build Your Future.

There are a lot of great things about [working at Walmart](#), and the Live Better U education benefit is one of the favorites. Live Better U pays for Walmart and Sam's Club associates to learn critical skills and creates pathways for them to promote into [in-demand jobs with the company](#).

\$730m+

saved in tuition

126k

associates have participated

100k+

roles to fill in the next three years

Forming a Partnership

- **Identify the right retail partner**
 - Target companies whose brand values align with your mission
- **Craft a Clear Proposal**
 - Include the goals of the partnership and specific ways the retailer can work
- **Offer Workforce Readiness Support**

Provide job preparedness programs; resume workshops, interview practice, etc.

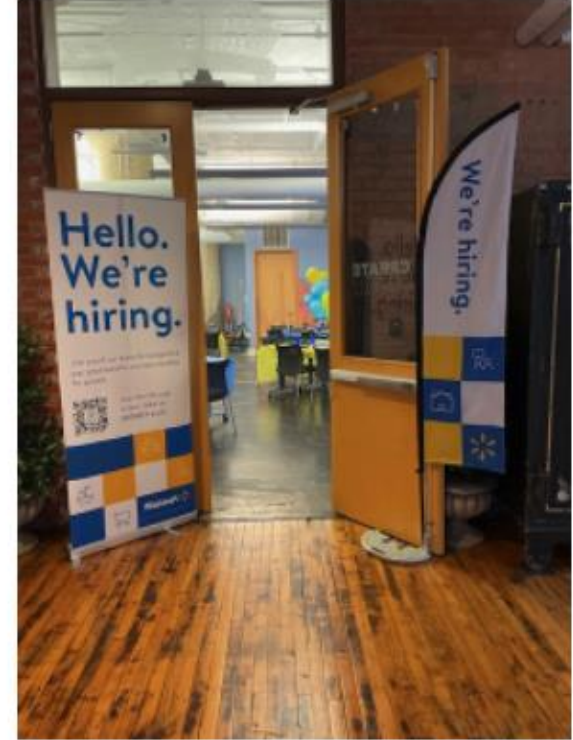
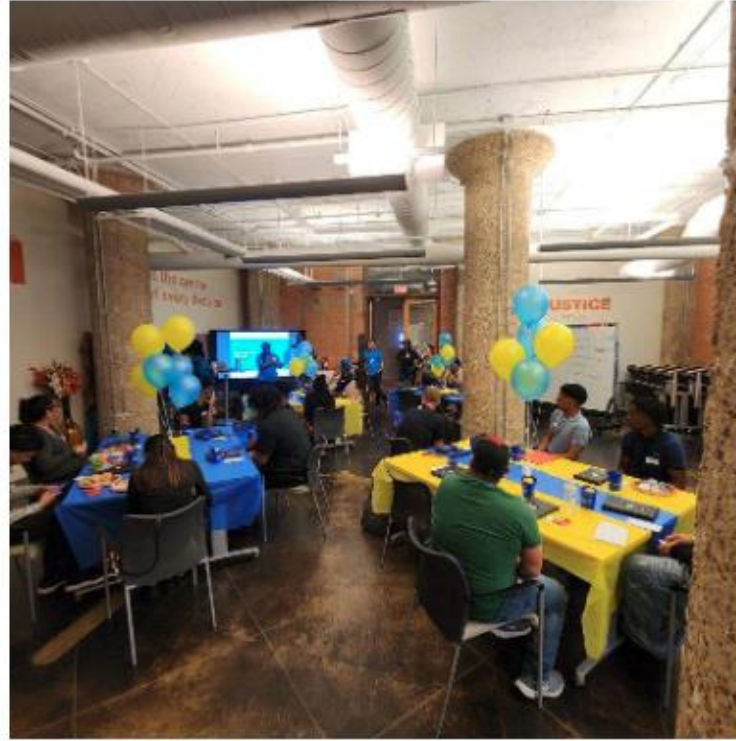


Forming a Partnership



- **Propose a Pilot Program**
 - Suggest a small-scale pilot to test and make corrections
- **Maintain Open Communication**
 - Set regular check-ins to gather and share feedback from participants and employers
- **Measure & Share Impact**
 - Track outcomes (job placements, retention rates, employee satisfaction) and share success stories publicly

Walmart x Big Thought



Walmart x Big Thought



QUESTIONS FOR KANDACE

ENGAGING ACTIVITY

Question 1: What mindsets do we, as collaborators, need to unlearn to truly co-design with youth?

Question 2: When considering a partnership with a company, which organizational values do you prioritize, and why?

Question 3: What is your strategic approach to fostering healthy collaborations that effectively bridge communities and businesses?



**Senior
Director,
Learning
Systems**



**Youth
Advancement
Manager**

**Opportunity
Youth
Project
Coordinator**



Laying The Foundation

The Goal:

Establish the groundwork for effective collaboration by aligning values and goals.

Key Points:

Shared Vision & Mission Alignment: Understand each other's core purpose—why you do what you do?
Align on long-term outcomes (e.g., social impact for nonprofit; CSR/brand reputation for business).

Trust & Transparency:

Set expectations early—clarity around roles, responsibilities, and decision-making.
Open communication channels and regular check-ins build mutual trust.

Cultural Sensitivity:

Recognize differences in work pace, priorities, and language between sectors.
Train both sides to understand one another's drivers and constraints.

Design Win-Win Collaboration

The Goal:

Show how to structure partnerships that deliver mutual value.

Key Points:

Asset Mapping:

Nonprofits bring community trust, field expertise, and grassroots access.

Businesses offer funding, logistics, tech, and marketing power.

Co-Creation of Initiatives:

Avoid one-sided “charity” models; instead, co-design programs together.

Examples: employee volunteering, cause marketing, skills-based sponsorships.

Performance & Impact Metrics:

Define shared KPIs—impact for nonprofit, ROI/brand lift for business.

Use dashboards or joint reports to show progress.

Sustaining and Scaling the Partnership

The Goal:

Focus on long-term success and adapting to growth.

Key Points:

Ongoing Communication & Feedback:

Schedule periodic reviews and adapt to changing needs.

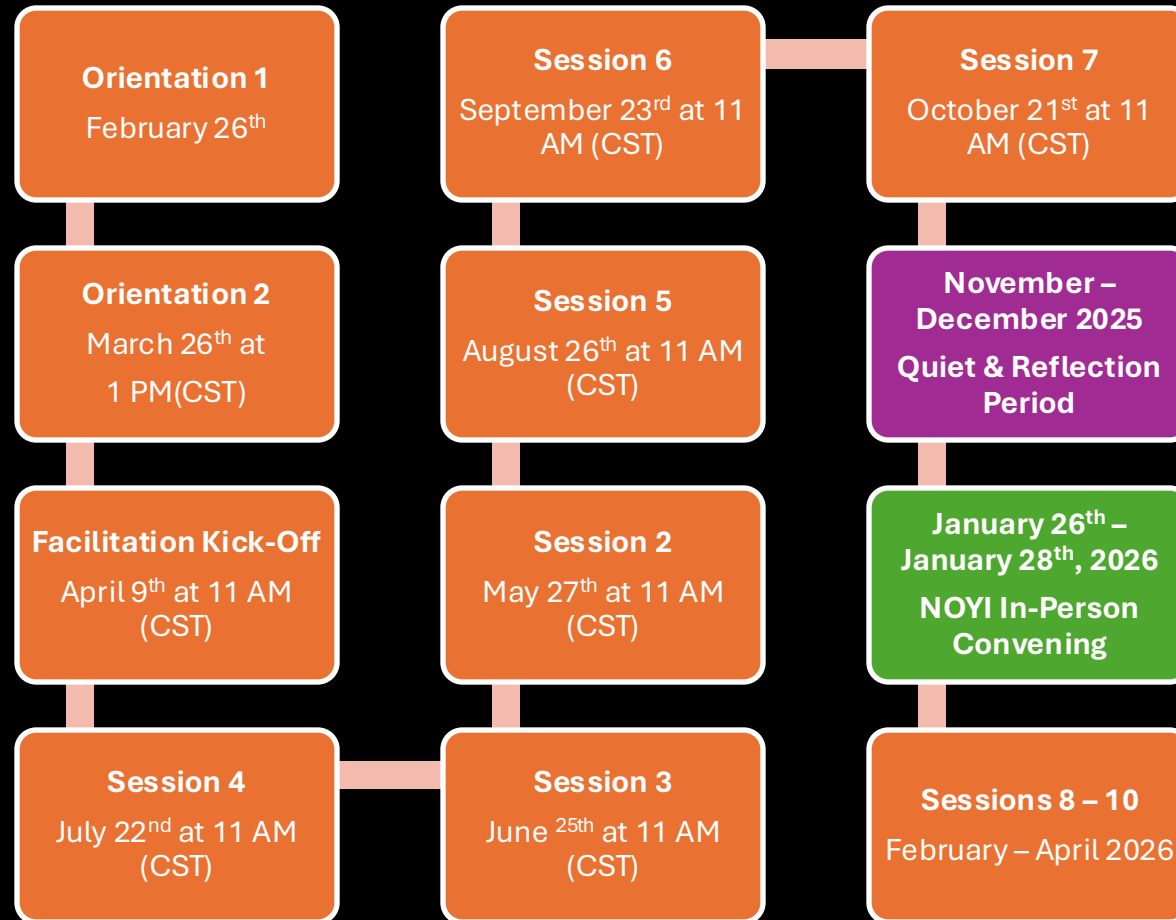
Use learning loops to adjust strategy or improve efficiency.

Celebrating Success Together:

Joint storytelling through media, events

QUESTIONS FOR THE OY TEAM

Timeline



OPTIMISTIC CLOSING & UPDATES

Optimistic Closing: What is something you gave into this session? What is something you are taking away from this session?

Next Session Updates:

Session 3 will be on June 25th @ 11:00 CST

Intake Forms

Zoom Invitation

