

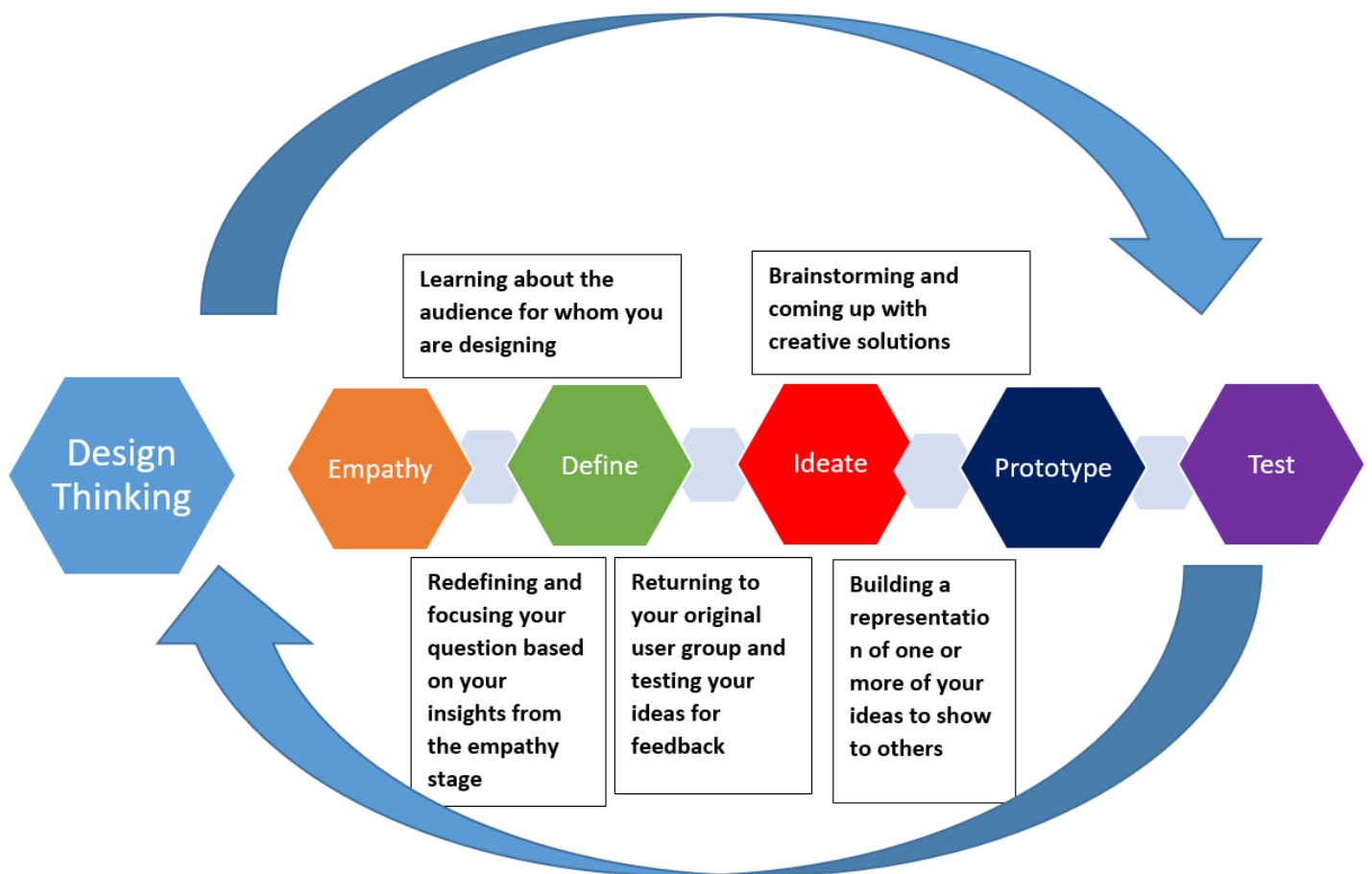
# Interviewing for Empathy

Sarah Nagle, Creation & Innovation Services Librarian  
pricesb@miamioh.edu

## About Empathy & Design

Design thinking is an interactive design process based on empathy. While design thinking was created as a tool for designing objects and systems, it can also be used as a problem-solving tool in any discipline or work environment. For this assignment, you'll be using empathy in the interview process to better understand the experience of your Latin American peers.

Empathy is just one stage of the Design Thinking process, but it's arguably the most important one. Practicing empathy means learning from those for whom you are designing. When we practice empathy, we get to know the group or person for whom we're designing on a deep level. We don't **assume** what they need/want. We use several methods to understand their experiences, needs, problems, and viewpoints. One of those methods is interviewing.



## Interview Strategies for Empathy

An interview is one tool for practicing empathy and better understanding a person or group that has different experiences from your own.

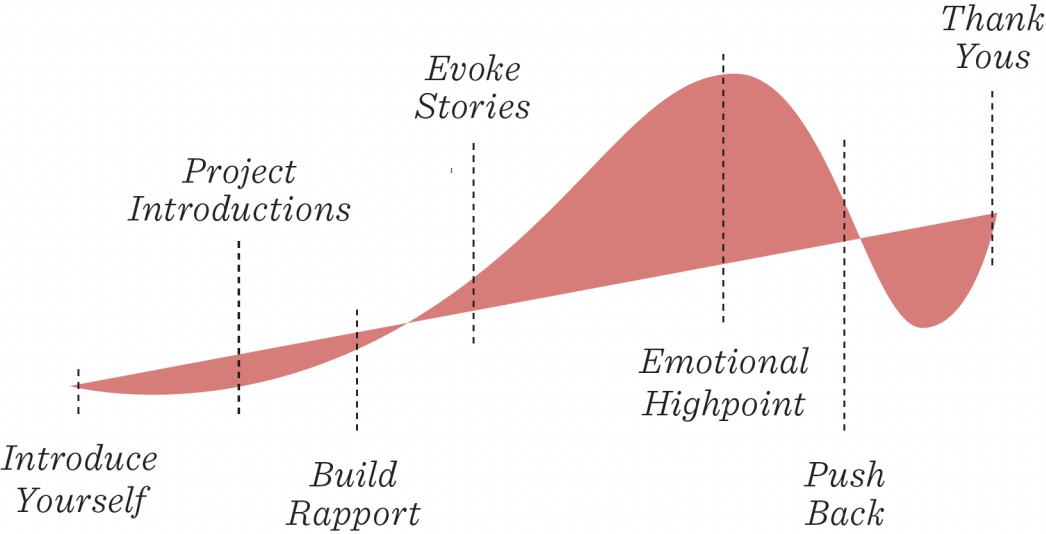
### **5 Tips for Interviewing (Adapted from [IDEO](#))**

1. Ask open-ended questions - Open-ended questions are ones that can't simply be answered with a "yes" or "no". They often include "why" and "how" in order to prompt interviewees to give more details. Open-ended questions lead to conversation instead of simple back and forth questioning.
2. "Show me" - Ask participants to show, rather than tell, the answers to certain questions. This could start by you asking "Can you show me how that works?" as a follow-up question.
3. Start broad, finish deep - You might start your interview with simple questions to break the ice and get to know someone a bit better. Based on their answers to open-ended questions, the conversation will naturally move to specific topics or interests. You can then dig deeper into those areas.
4. Build rapport - You can build rapport with your interviewee by having comforting body language (make eye contact, nod, and smile) to show you are interested in what they're saying.
5. Mind the Gap - Pay attention to what your interviewee might *not* be saying. Look for gaps in what they're communicating and ask questions that prompt them to fill in the gaps.

### **Some Interview Strategies to Try (Adapted from [IDEO](#))**

- Ask participants to tell a story, using phrasing like, "Tell me about a time when..."
- Try asking "why" in response to 5 questions in a row!
- Don't be afraid of silence. This gives the interviewee time to think and answer thoughtfully. Don't finish sentences or assume what they were going to say. Let them express their thoughts at their own speed.
- Don't judge! Don't challenge or correct what your interviewee says.
- Ask your interviewee to "think aloud" as they are responding. Make sure they know it's a "no judgement" environment.

**INTERVIEW CURVE // 60-90 MINS**



Source: IDEO - Insights for Innovation Toolkit, 2022