

The Effectiveness of Design Thinking

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A game changer that helps us visualise any problem in a new light

Have you come across situations where effort was spent in solving a problem but people facing the problem are still unhappy? One of the reasons is because we take a data-driven approach which is influenced by the right questions and facts, but miss out on the real problem. The School of Design Thinking (SoDT) comes to your rescue. It believes that with the skill of design thinking, one can solve the ‘wickedest of problems’.

“Design thinking to me is the power of boundary-less thinking. Moving from the mystery of business to heuristics and then to algorithm,” says Arun Jain, Founder and Chief Design Thinker, SoDT, and Chairman and Managing Director of Intellect Design Arena Limited. Passionate about design thinking, Arun is an avid practitioner who applies its concepts diligently to all aspects of life — personal and professional

Changing viewpoint

According to Arun and many others from the school, design thinking, a problem-solving approach, is a game-changer; a way to get ahead and stand out in a crowd. It helps answer the question ‘why’; and once the reason is found, one is at the cusp of a solution, a breakthrough. “The ability to change our viewpoint from our own to that

of the user — to visualise, think, and feel what the user is going through is the key to design thinking. It is not about a mere attempt to get into the shoes of the person who is facing the problem, but becoming that person in the problem situation. Basically, unlearn what we have learnt all these years on problem-solving,” says SoDT’s Design Thinking Expert and Head, Dr. Anbu Rathinavel.

How best to go about this? Colleges, indeed! Phase 1 of the programme trains faculty members from various colleges through their flagship ‘Master Trainer Program’ and Phase 2 sees the setting up of Design Thinking Clubs for students to enrol. Professors who have taken up the Master Trainer Program spearhead the clubs with mentorship from SoDT.

The Master Trainer Program is a four-day residential course that takes the participants through a series of well thought out, project-driven curriculum — from shaping the thinking and dreams, to using mapping tools for persona, empathy, and journey, and more. “Principals and teachers have come back to us saying there is a distinct difference in how they handle situations in college after the Master Trainer Program, as it helped them identify blind spots in their approach with students,” says Anbu.

Design Thinking Club is up and running in Jeppiaar Institute of Technology, Chennai. Next up is Loyola-ICAM Institute of Engineering Technology, Chennai, and Sona College of Technology, Salem.

When asked why a teacher or student should look at design thinking and in what field of work would this help best, Anbu explains, “One thing design thinking can do is make one stand out in approaching a future-focused solution for a problem.

This is turning out to be a much sought after life skill. Design thinking is not limited to a few fields; it can be used in any field like how communication and presentation skills are a necessity no matter what profession you pick.”

The School of Design Thinking hosts an array of structured programmes like Unmukt: Preparing the Design Mind, 10X Growth for Entrepreneurs, Design Thinking for Educators, Customer Centricity for StartUps, and Innovation Mindset for Students.