

From **inspiration** to **implementation**

Richard Finger • Lisa Shechter Moalem • Andy Gold

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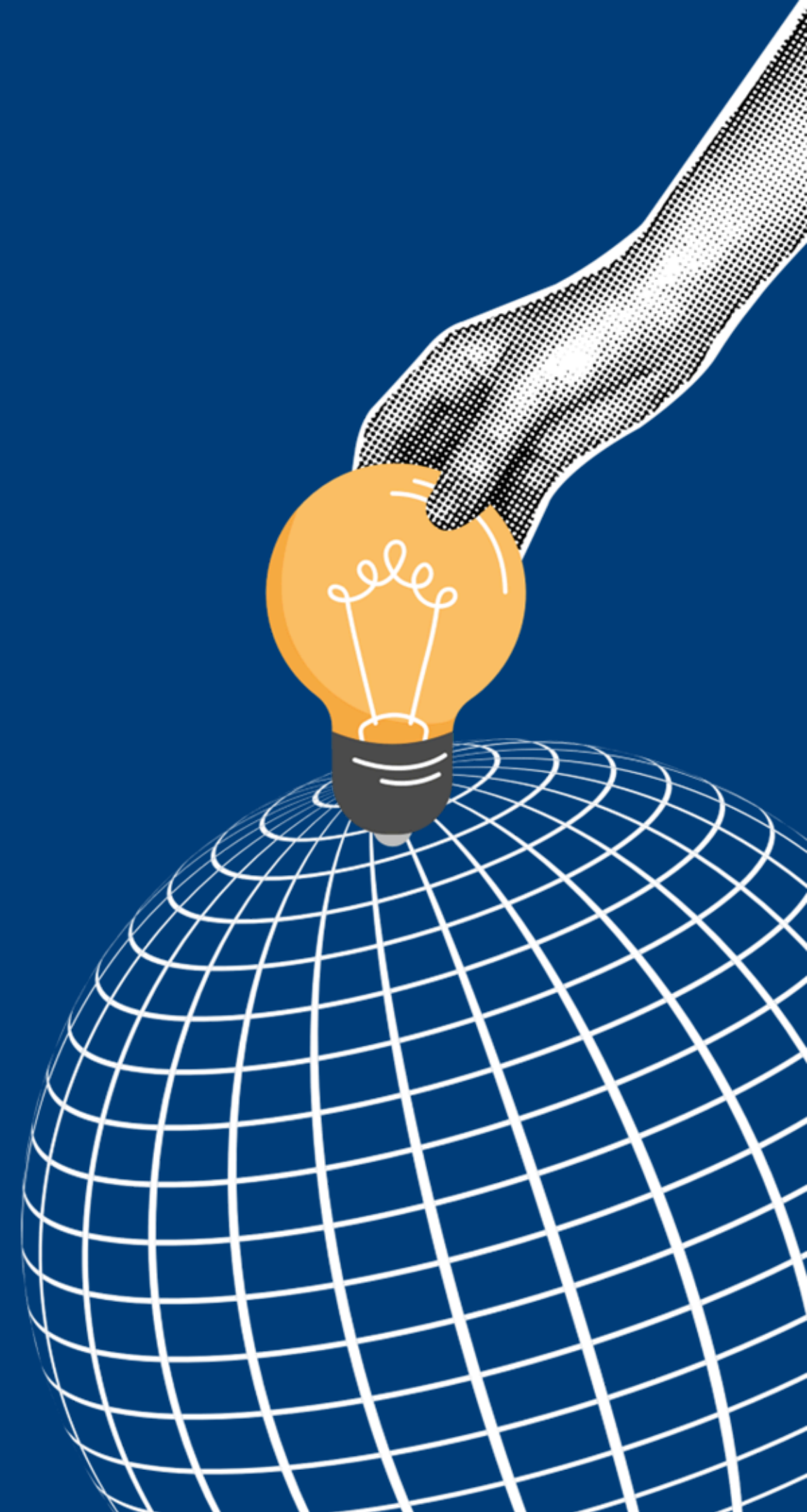
Lehman College, CUNY



Reimagining Academic Advising

Through a Human-Centered Design Thinking Sprint

Helping to Prepare Students for the Future of Work



YOUR PRESENTERS



Richard Finger

Vice President for
Enrollment Management
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Lisa Moalem

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Academic Advisement
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Andy Gold

Clinical Professor
School of Business
Management & Business
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What You Will Take Away Today

45-MINUTE SESSION FLOW

- 0–10 min **Context & the Sprint Story**
- 10–15 min **The Outcome: What Advisors Produced**
- 15–35 min **Interactive Design Thinking Activity**
- 35–45 min **Share-Out, Reflection & Toolkit**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Apply design thinking to higher ed challenges as a human-centered practice
- 2 Facilitate a structured sprint focused on empathy, belonging & agency
- 3 Reframe friction points into actionable "How Might We" questions
- 4 Create low-barrier prototypes that translate insights into practice
- 5 Develop an entrepreneurial mindset to help navigate uncertainty & resource constraints

THE FALL 2025 PROJECT PILOT



THE PROJECT IN ACTION



HOW MIGHT WE REIMAGINE ACADEMIC ADVISING?

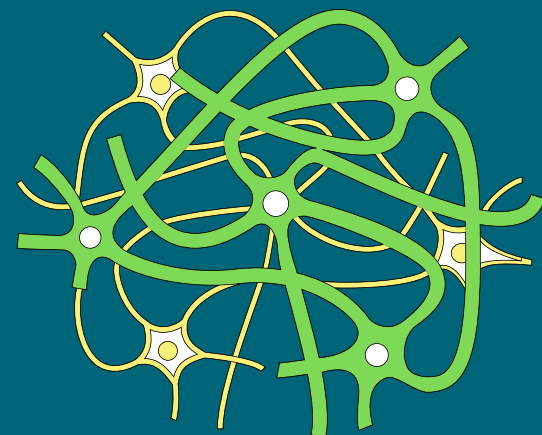


THE CHALLENGE

HOW MIGHT WE REIMAGINE ACADEMIC ADVISING?

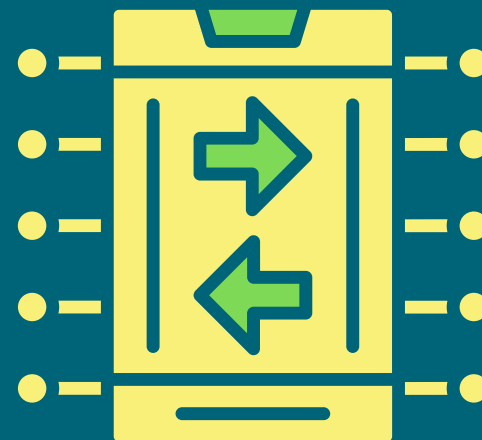
Complex & Evolving Student Needs

Students face non-linear academic, degree, and career paths and need more than course scheduling and degree audits



Beyond Transactional

Advising must evolve from transactional to relational, building belonging and agency



Future of Work

Preparing students for careers that don't yet exist requires new frameworks and mindsets



THE FRAMEWORK

The Design Thinking Process

Understand the student experience through their eyes



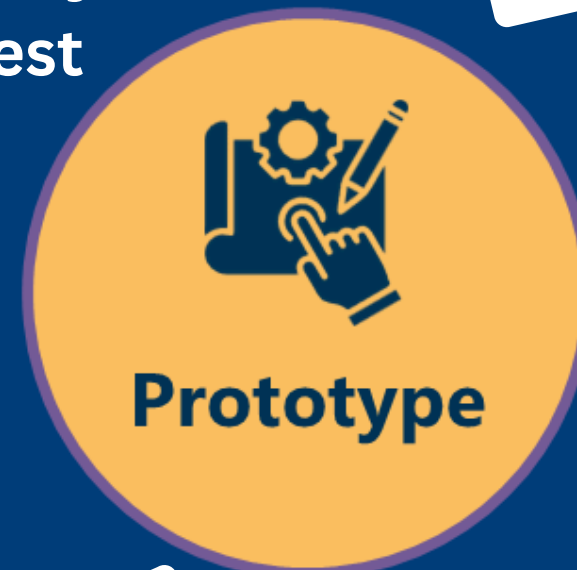
Frame the core challenge with a clear problem statement



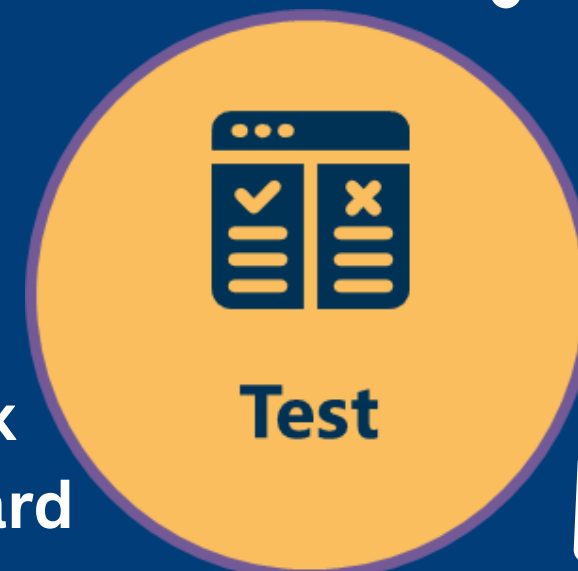
Generate bold ideas through divergent thinking



Build quick, low-fidelity solutions to test



Gather feedback and iterate toward impact



"A human-centered, collaborative approach to creative problem-solving"

THE PILOT

The Sprint: How it Worked

CORE QUESTION

- *How might we reimagine academic advising?*

1

Cross-Unit Teams

Advisors worked across units, taking on perspectives of core stakeholder groups

2

Empathy Mapping

Developed deep understanding of student experiences and challenges

3

Problem Framing

Co-created focused problem statements from diverse perspectives

4

Rapid Ideation

Generated bold solutions through divergent, collaborative thinking

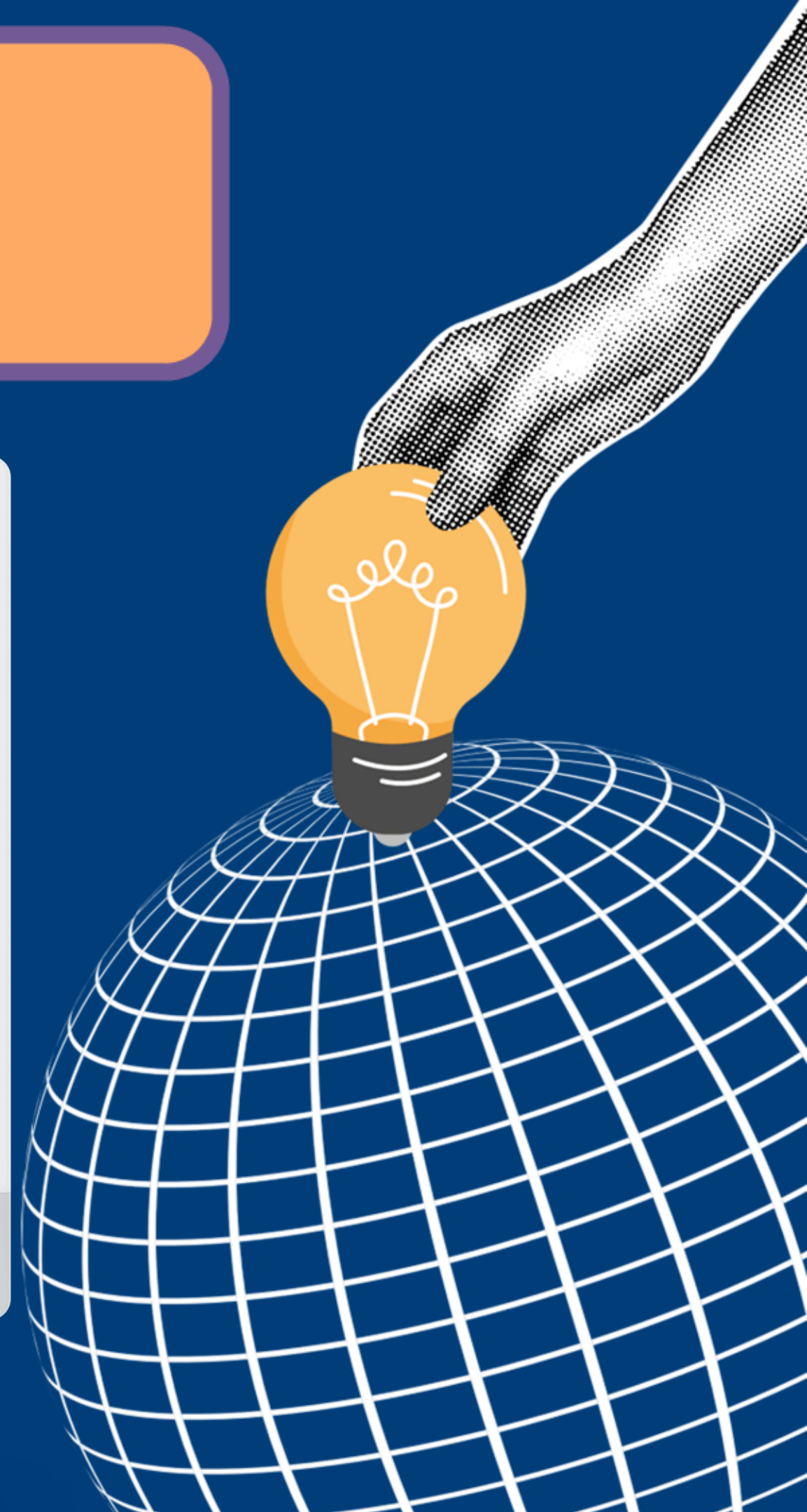
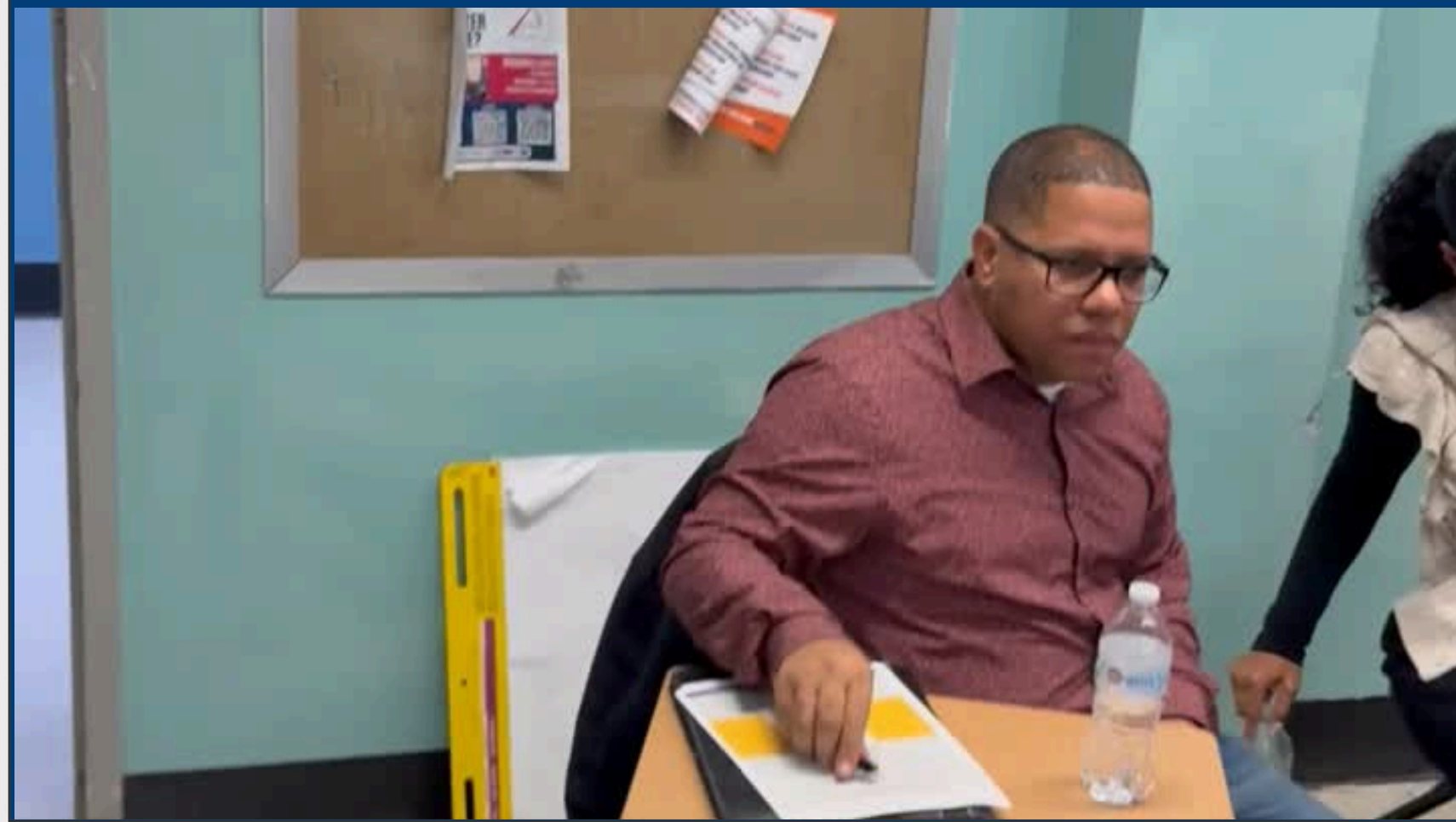
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Prototyping

Built actionable, low-fidelity solutions for immediate testing



WHAT WE DID



RESULTS

What Advisors Produced

Shared Problem Statements

Cross-unit teams identified and aligned on the core challenges facing advising today

Friction Point Mapping

Clearer identification of where students experience confusion, disengagement, and lost momentum

Proactive Advising

Prototype ideas for initiating outreach before students hit roadblocks

Career Signal Integration

Early prototypes connecting advising conversations to future-of-work readiness

Student Ownership Models

Frameworks empowering students to take greater ownership of academic decisions

Advisor Collaboration

Increased trust and shared purpose among advising staff across units

IMPACT

What Changed? **Key Outcomes**

PRIMARY OUTCOMES

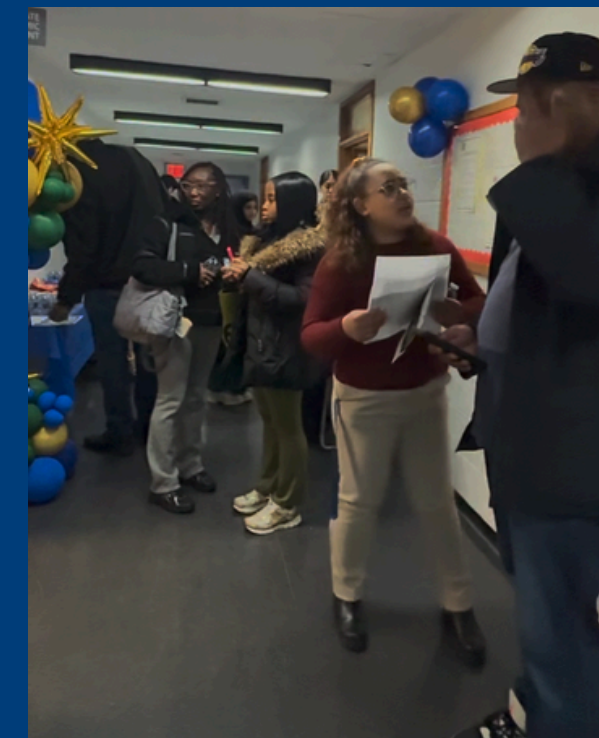
- More proactive advising conversations
- More frequent and intentional referrals to student services
- Greater student ownership of academic decisions
- Clearer identification of advising friction points

SECONDARY OUTCOMES

- Increased trust, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose among advisors
- Advisors are proactively seeking out training and professional development opportunities
- Greater advisor buy-in to a relational, holistic advising approach

KEY INSIGHT

The sprint moved from theory to shared action, creating both practical prototypes and cultural shifts in how advisors collaborate.





Interactive Design Thinking Activity

A condensed design thinking exercise
mirroring the pilot sprint with advisors

Access our accompanying web
app **designed in Claude AI** to
help guide you through our
activity.



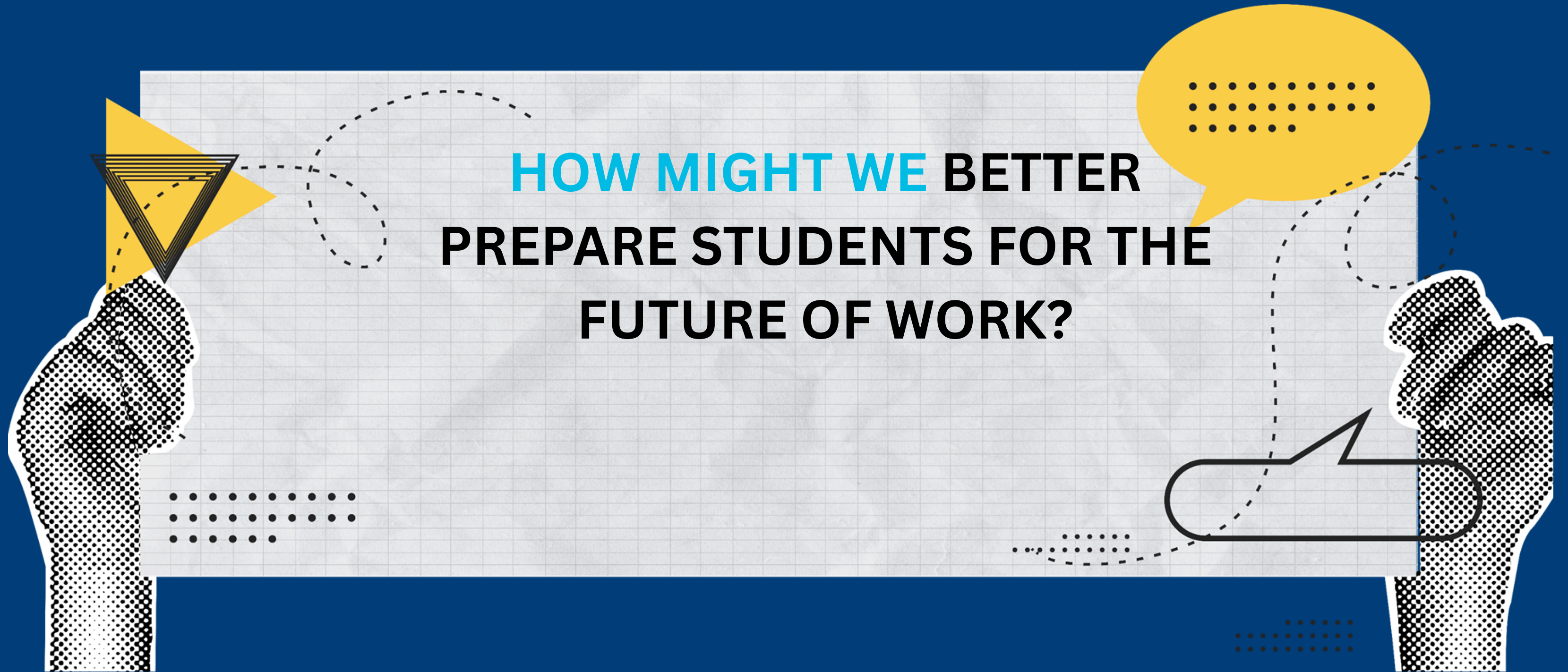
THE
H ICE
BREAKER

The logo features the text 'THE H ICE BREAKER' in a bold, stylized font. 'THE' is at the top in a simple sans-serif font. 'H ICE' is in a large, outlined font where the 'H' is partially obscured by a basketball. 'BREAKER' is in a similar outlined font below it. The entire text is set against a background of light blue ice cubes and a basketball.



Our Big Design Challenge

**HOW MIGHT WE BETTER
PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE
FUTURE OF WORK?**





Practice Activity

got empathy?

SAYS	THINKS
FEELS	DOES
INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS	





Discuss one of the following questions... **you have 120 seconds**

- Do you think we are preparing students with the skills that will help them enter the workforce?
- What excites you or our students about the future?
- What concerns you or our students about in the future?



Empathy Building

1

Empathy Prompt

Reflect on the grand challenge we are working on: **“How might we better prepare students for the future of work”**

2

Discussion Questions

Select a question or two from the list on the right and have a group discussion

Empathy & Awareness

- What skills do employers increasingly value that our students don't realize they're already building?
- Where do students first encounter anxiety about career readiness?
- What assumptions do we (as advisors/faculty) make about "career-ready" that may not match students' lived realities?

Advising & Curriculum Connections

- How might we embed future-of-work conversations naturally into every advising interaction, not just career counseling?
- What if every course syllabus explicitly named the transferable skills students would learn in that course?
- How might we help students connect their general education courses to career narratives?

Belonging & Agency

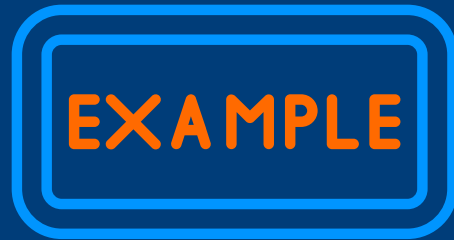
- How might we help first-generation students see themselves as professionals before they graduate?
- What would it look like if students owned their career development story from day one?
- How do we prepare students for jobs that don't exist yet without increasing their anxiety?

Systems & Institutional Change

- What's the smallest change in our advising process that would have the biggest impact on career readiness?
- How might we create feedback loops between employers, alumni, and current students?
- What barriers in our current systems accidentally signal to students that career planning is "someone else's job"?

Problem Statement Framework

Statement	Description
I am	Describe customer with 3–4 key characteristics – <i>who are they?</i>
I'm trying to	List their outcome or “job” they care about – <i>what are they trying to achieve?</i>
but	Describe what problems or barriers stand in the way – <i>what bothers them most?</i>
because	Enter the "root cause" of why the problem or barrier exists – <i>what needs to be solved?</i>
which makes me feel	Describe the emotions from the customer’s point of view – <i>how does it impact them emotionally?</i>



Problem Statement Framework

I am a Lehman College student

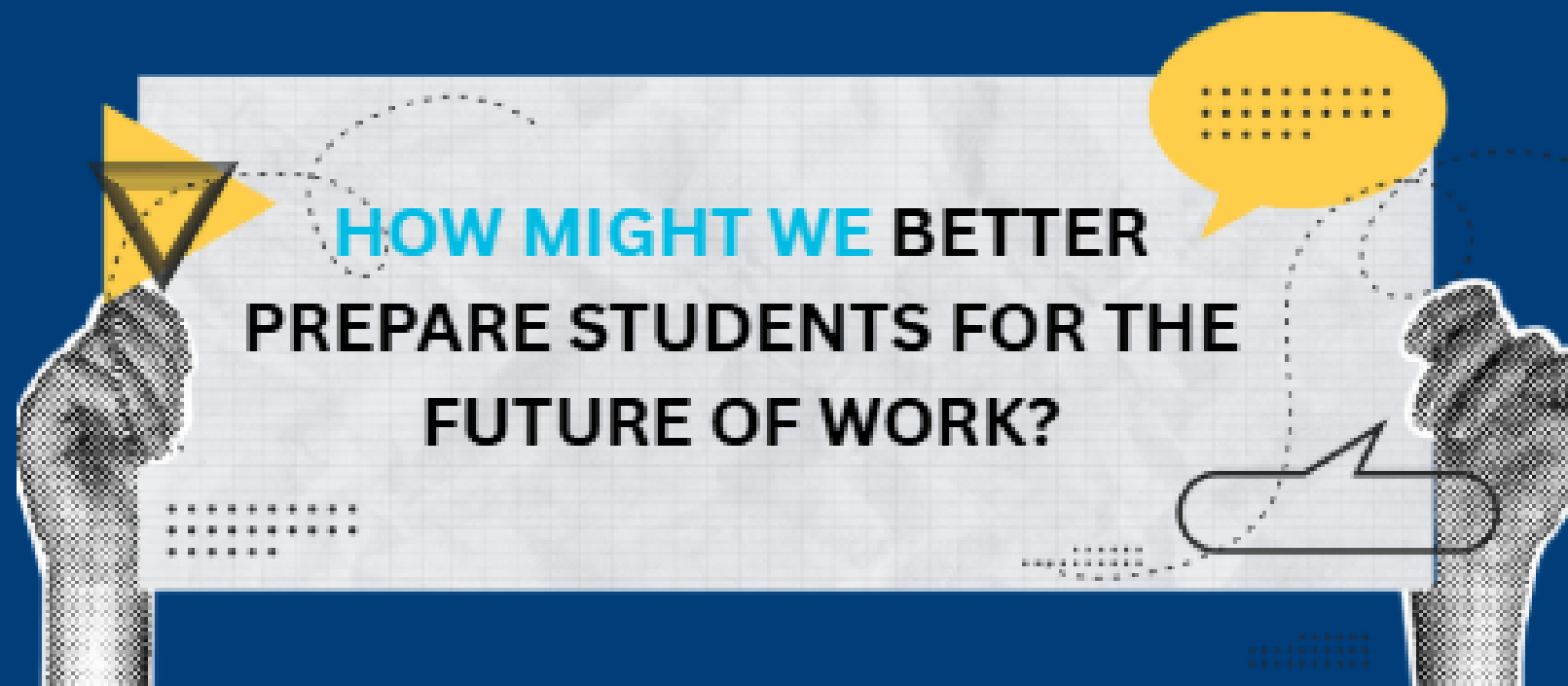
I am trying to find a full-time job.

But there are fewer entry level job opportunities available, and many jobs require several years of work experience.

Because AI is replacing many entry level jobs, and there is increased economic uncertainty

Which makes me feel discouraged, and scared.

Problem Statement Framework



I am _____

I am trying _____

But _____

Because _____

Which makes me _____

Based on your group discussion, create a problem statement through the perspective of a specific stakeholder (college student, faculty, advisor, administrator, employer etc.)

Ideate & Prototype

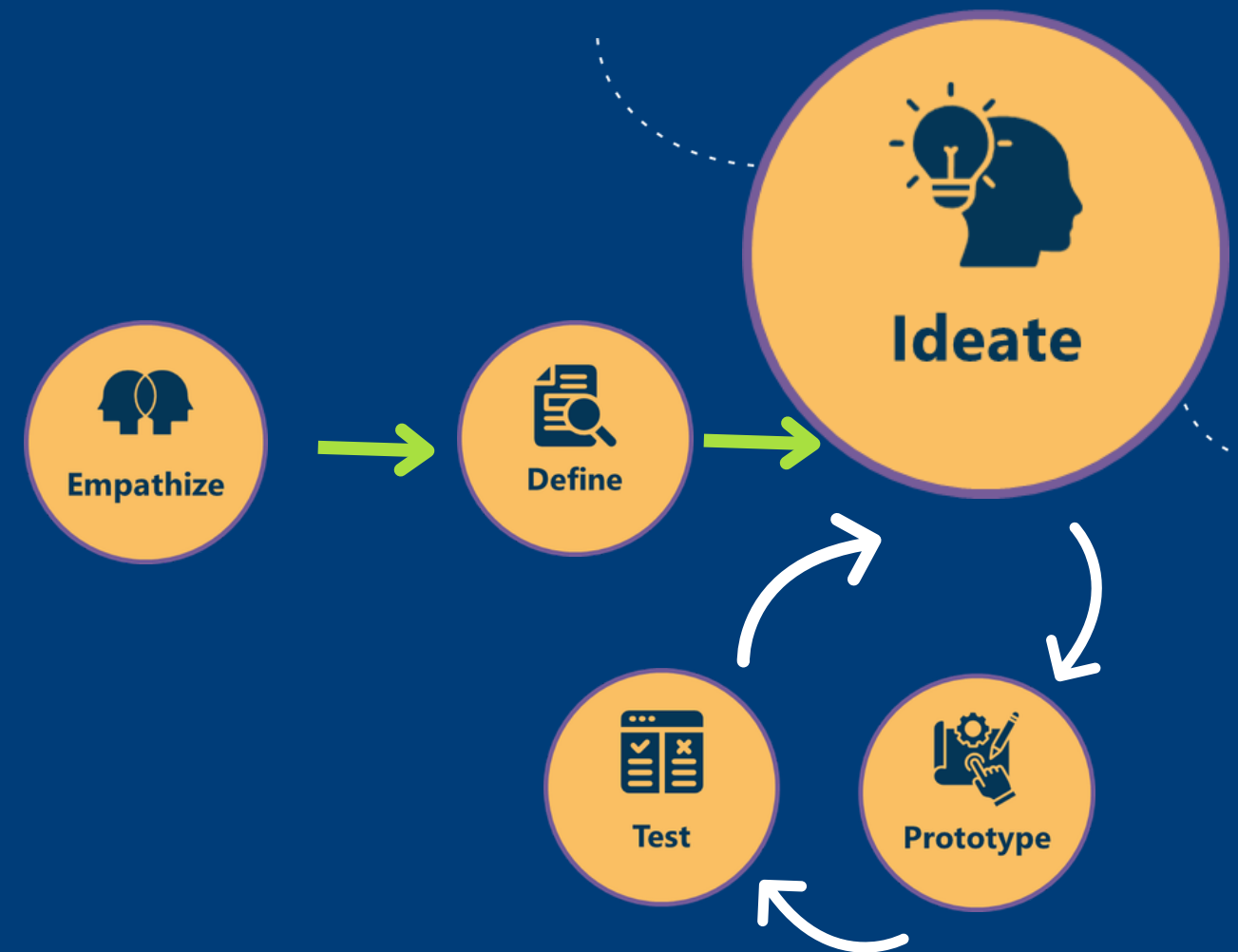
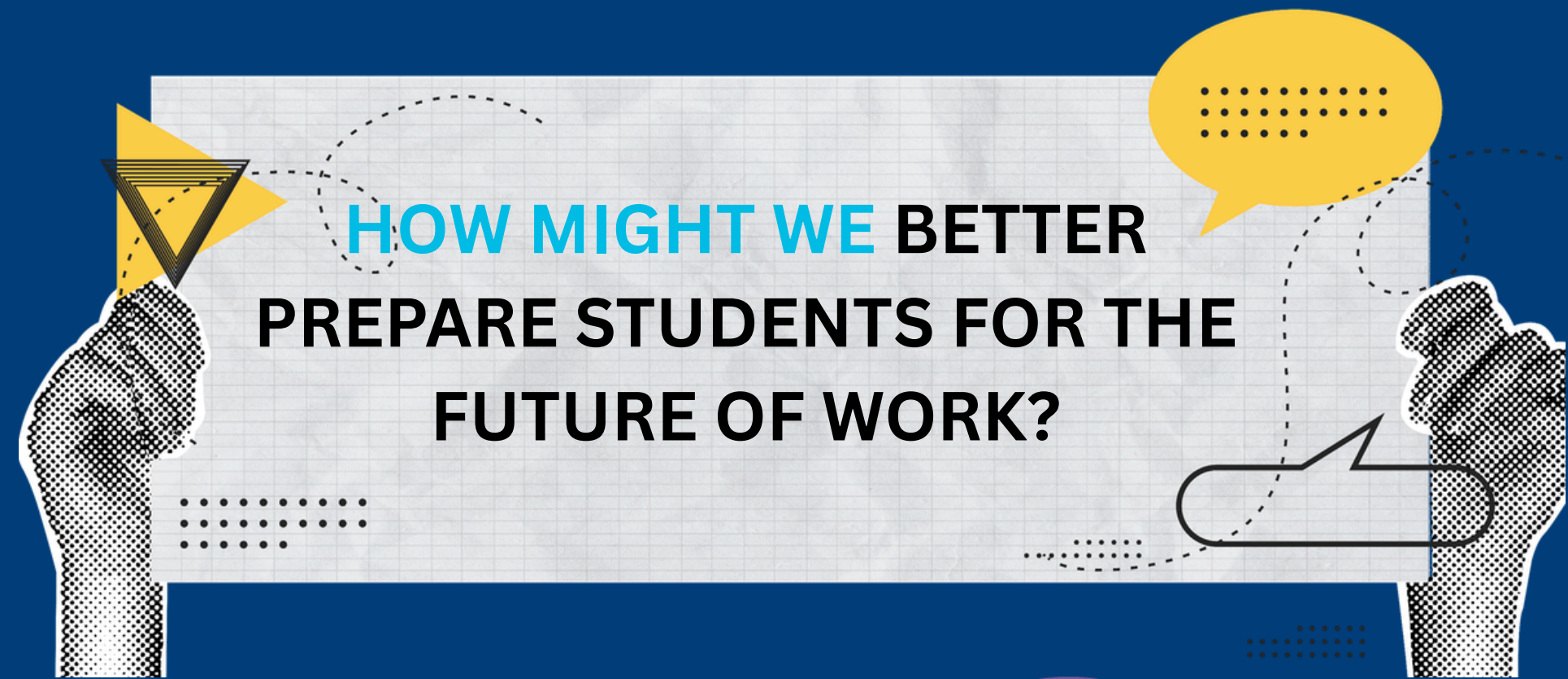
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Rapid Ideation

Generate as many ideas as possible. Think boldly and build on each other's thinking.

Guidelines

- Divergent thinking: no idea is too wild
- Cross-role perspectives welcome
- Build on others' ideas
- Quantity over quality (for now!)

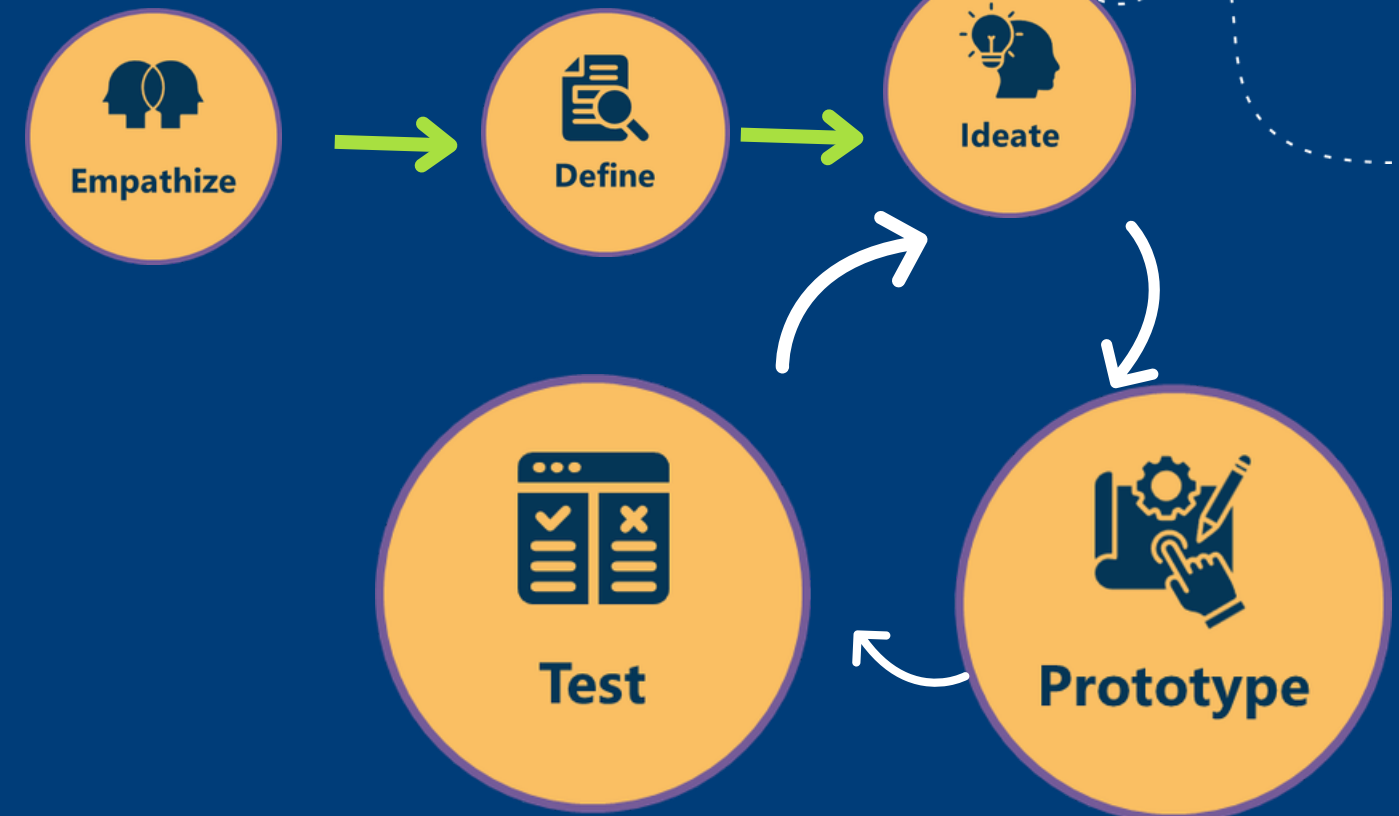
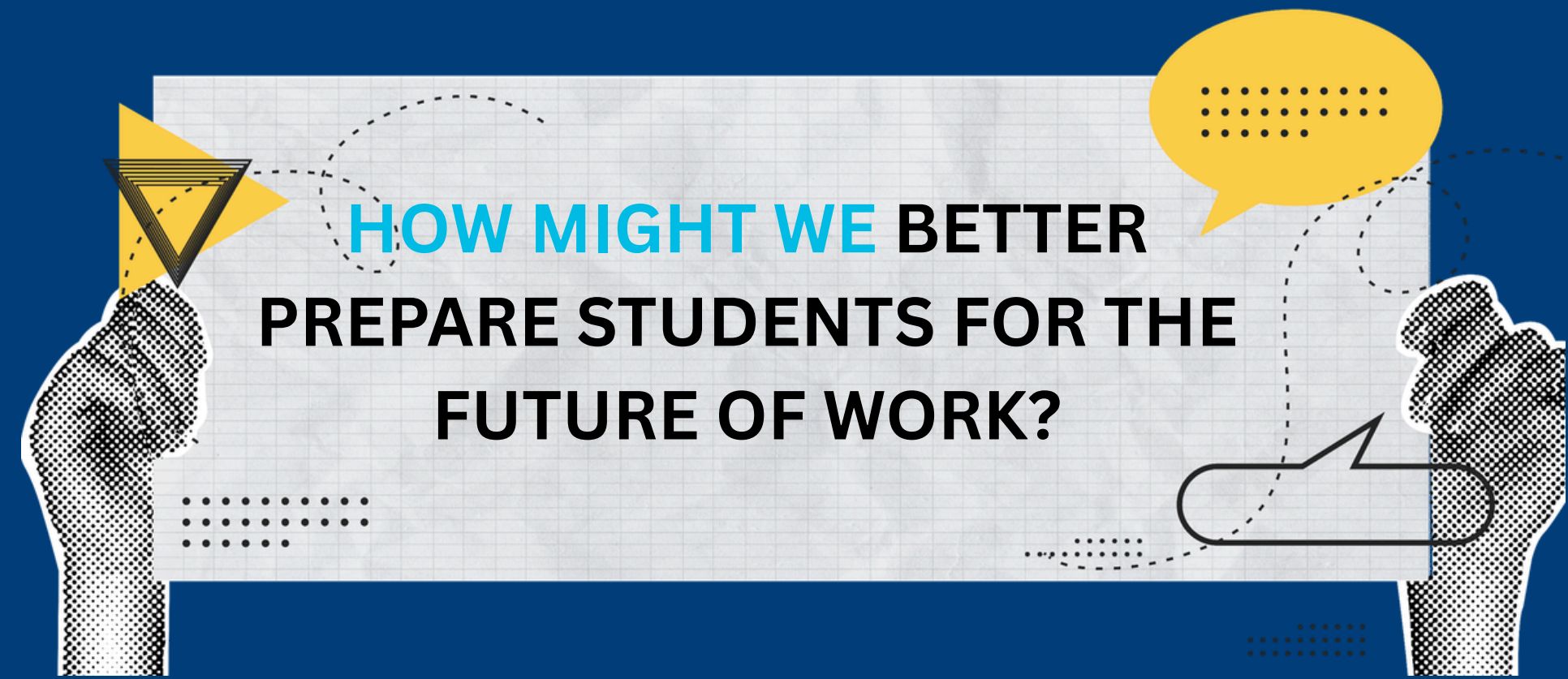


Ideate & Prototype

4

Low-Fi Prototype

Select one idea and sketch a low-fidelity prototype. The prototype will be shared through a brief presentation.



Finally we get to **TEST OUR PROTOTYPE**





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