



A2 Idea Challenge

Finding solutions with the *Design Thinking* method



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All Challenges of level A2 are also available in a printed version in German. You can find them at www.jugendstärken.at (Jugend stärken, volume 1 - 4).



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Empowering Youth with the Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges Programme

CORE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

 IDEA CHALLENGE I can develop an idea.	 HERO CHALLENGE I can learn from role models.
 MY PERSONAL CHALLENGE I can solve personal challenges.	 LEMONADE STAND CHALLENGE I can sell things.
 REAL MARKET CHALLENGE I can develop a business plan for the market.	 START YOUR PROJECT CHALLENGE I can plan and implement my project with a team.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

 EMPATHY CHALLENGE I can empathise with myself and with others.	 STORYTELLING CHALLENGE I can tell stories.	 BUDDY CHALLENGE I can support others in achieving their goals.
 PERSPECTIVES CHALLENGE I can understand I am part of my environment.	 TRASH VALUE CHALLENGE I can create something valuable out of garbage.	 OPEN DOOR CHALLENGE I can network with others.
 EXTREME CHALLENGE I can set and achieve difficult goals.	 BE A YES CHALLENGE I can say "yes" to myself and those around me.	 EXPERT CHALLENGE I can apply learning and communication techniques.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CIVIC EDUCATION

 MY COMMUNITY CHALLENGE I can do things for the community where I live.	 VOLUNTEER CHALLENGE I can engage in community service.	 DEBATE CHALLENGE I can develop and debate my opinion.
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The Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges Programme is based on the TRIO Model, which is a holistic definition of entrepreneurship that encompasses three areas:

- CORE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION** – Supports entrepreneurial qualification in a narrow sense: developing own ideas and implementing them creatively and in a well-structured way.
- ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE** – Personal development: self-initiative, self-confidence, teamwork, empowering oneself and others.
- ENTREPRENEURIAL CIVIC EDUCATION** – Enhancing social competences as citizens: assuming responsibility for oneself, others and the environment.

"Empowering Youth" is a holistic learning programme for lower secondary school students and promotes personal initiatives and entrepreneurial spirit. It is part of the "Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges" programme. All competence levels (A1 = primary level, A2 = lower secondary level, B1+B2 = upper secondary level) can be downloaded at www.youthstart.eu in English, German and other languages. The "Mind & Body" section provides short video clips with physical "activate & concentrate" exercises and the "Youth Start mindfulness programme".



Preface

Empowering Youth ...

... refers to the title, the goal and the content of a practice-oriented, holistic learning programme which was developed for **lower secondary school students**. Bigger and smaller “**challenges**” form the key elements of the programme. They function as learning prompts from three key areas that play an important role in empowering young people:

- **entrepreneurial thinking and acting**,
- **personal development** and
- **social commitment**.

Each key area is assigned a different colour to help differentiate between them. A diagram of the entire programme is included on the previous page.



Empowering Youth is part of the “**Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges**” Programme which aims to foster personal initiative and the entrepreneurial spirit of young people. It was developed in Austria for both primary and secondary school students, and it has been translated into six languages.



The **Idea Challenge** encourages young people to employ the method of **Design Thinking to find solutions**. They use their empathy and creativity to develop as many ideas as possible and they experiment & test until they have found a good solution for a given problem. They also learn from their mistakes – feedback is welcome!

The “Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges” Programme supports children in developing their potential.

This was proven by a scientific field study which was carried out from 2015 to 2018 in Austria, Slovenia, Portugal and Luxembourg with about 30,000 children and teenagers.

The research results demonstrate that by working with the programme in lower secondary school, the students’ self-esteem is improved, and teamwork, creativity, and networked and critical thinking are fostered.


The students do not only learn how to communicate empathically and how to treat themselves and others with care and respect; they additionally acquire basic economic qualifications that are vital for their future working life.


We wish everyone working with this programme many inspiring learning experiences!

Eva Jambor and Johannes Lindner, editors


www.youthstart.eu | www.jedeskindstärken.at | www.ifte.at


These symbols will guide you through the challenge. They have the following meaning:


 Instructions for an exercise

 Talk to someone about it

 Extra tip for you

 Think about it

 Bonus task

 More information can be found in the teacher guide



A2 Idea Challenge








Finding solutions with the Design Thinking method

In the **A2 Idea Challenge** you will use *Design Thinking*. This is a method that enables you to find creative solutions for problems and challenges. It requires empathy and a profound understanding of the needs of others. You will learn to ask empathic questions, come up with ideas, experiment & test and continue developing your ideas until you have found a good solution.

Explanatory video: www.youthstartchallenges.eu/A2IdeaEN

Additional e-learning-tool: **Entrepreneurship Challenge**, www.flipchallenge.at (German only)

Seven steps to the finish line:

	Step 1 - <i>Design thinking</i> : getting started	4
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Aim

I can develop an idea.

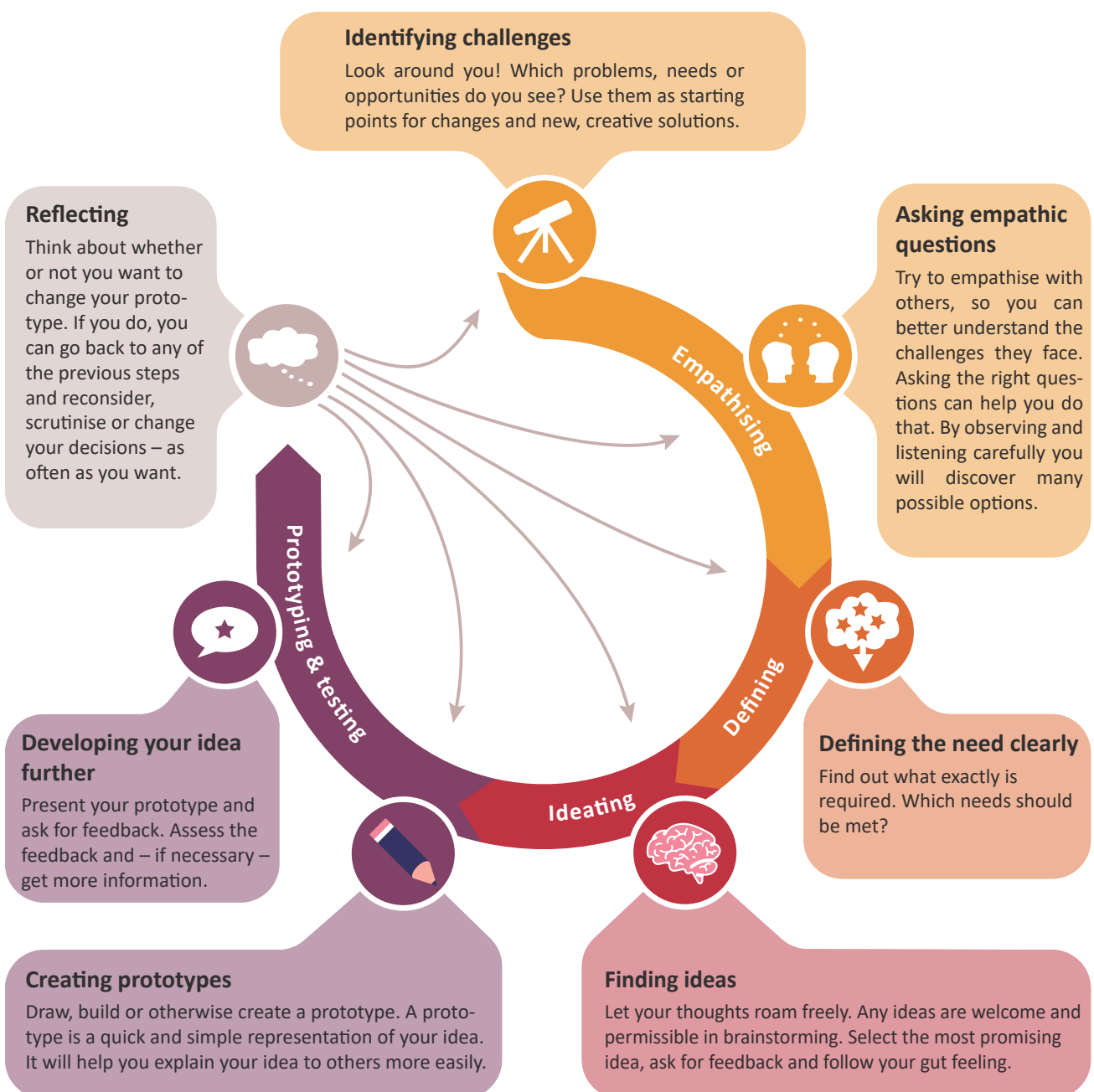




Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a method that shows you how to use your creativity and empathy to make the world a little better.

It relies on a profound understanding of the needs of others – but also on respect and understanding for all living creatures and for all of nature.





2.1. What is the problem? Identify the challenge!



Look around you! Which problems, needs or opportunities do you see?
Use them as starting points for changes and new, creative solutions.

In the following you will meet four very different individuals who have one thing in common: they have no adequate **chair**.



Read through the story cards and find out which challenges these four individuals face and what exactly they need. Discuss it with someone.



If you put yourself in the place of each person and play their role for a few minutes, you will be able to imagine their situation more clearly.

Karl is an old man who often complains about his pain. Sometimes this puts him in a bad mood. He has a walking aid, but he has trouble sitting down and getting back up again. This is why he sits around most of the day.



Kai goes to school and spends many hours a day in class. He sits on an uncomfortable chair for most of this time. He has many things he needs to put away in his desk. When he moves to another classroom, he drags around a heavy school bag.





Mila exercises a lot and runs long distances every day. She has a hard time relaxing, because her muscles are often sore. When she does sit down, she wants to rest up and recover so she will be ready to continue exercising the next day.



Alice is one year old and very curious. She likes to explore her surroundings. She takes things out of their containers, puts objects into her mouth and touches everything she finds. She doesn't like it when mum or dad interfere with her explorations. When she is made to sit still, she gets whiny.



Decide which of these four individuals you would like to help.



The “mirror exercise” can help you put yourself in somebody else’s place. Here’s how it works:

Find a partner. Stand up and face each other.

Person A moves and person B tries to “mirror” the movement, i.e. to repeat it almost simultaneously. The movements can be big or small, jerky or fluent, etc. They should always be carried out facing each other so that person B can see what person A is doing. Change roles after two minutes.

The “Mind & Body” section at www.youthstart.eu contains video instructions for the “mirror exercise” and for further “activate & concentrate” exercises.



2.2. Ask empathic questions



Try to empathise with others, so you can better understand the challenges they face. Asking the right questions can help you do that. By observing and listening carefully you will discover many possible options.

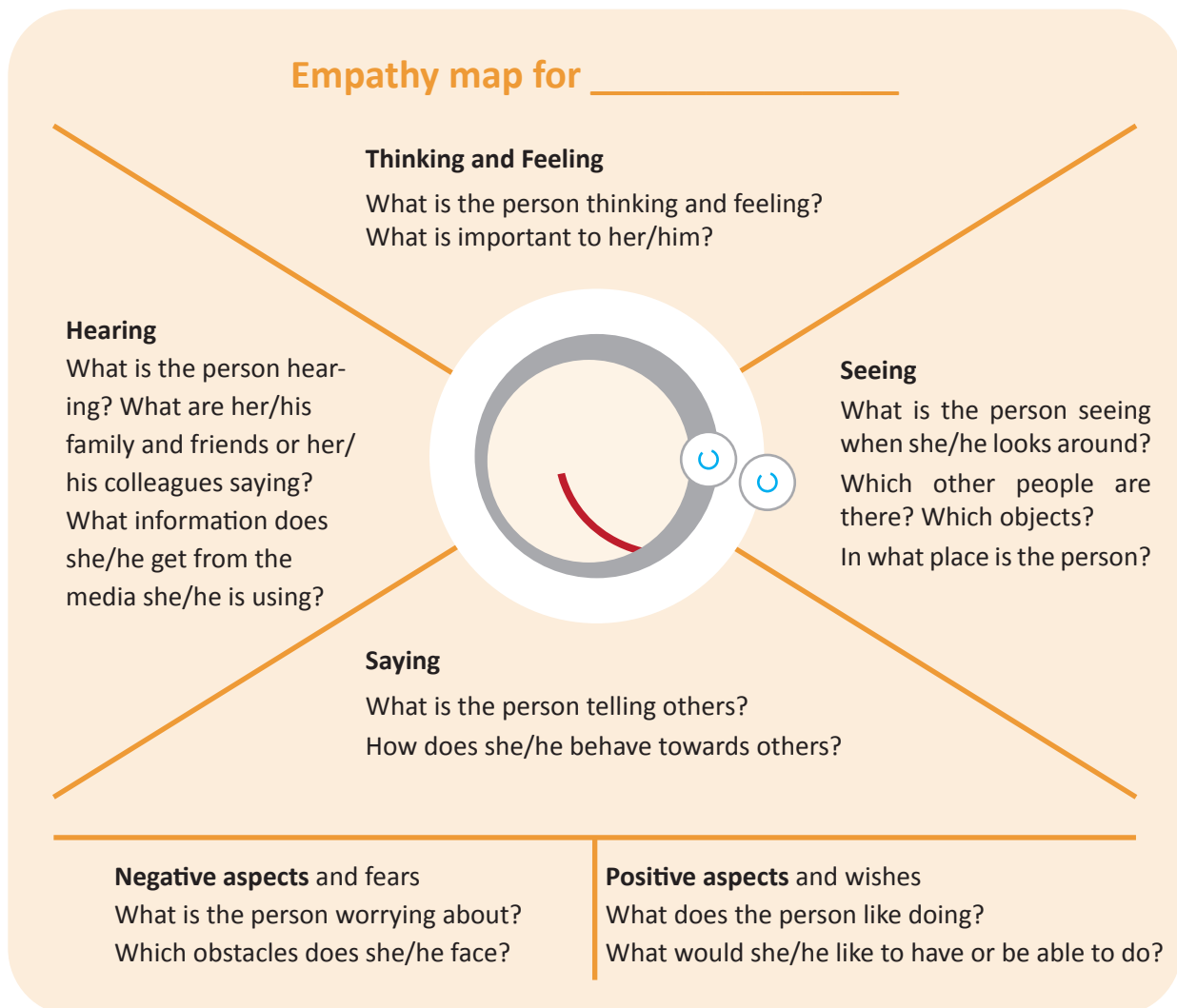


Fill in the empathy map for the person you have chosen. What is this person hearing, seeing, thinking and feeling? What is worrying her/him? What makes her/him happy?

Use the information from the four story cards. You can also make up additional details. When you are working with “real” individuals, you can ask them all these questions directly.



The Teacher Guide contains a copy template for the empathy map.



Write an inner monologue about a typical situation in “your” person’s life. This will help you imagine more clearly what she/he might be thinking, feeling and saying.



2.3. You can learn many things by asking questions



You have read the story cards and have filled in an empathy map for one person. You have an idea about what this person might be needing. Think about questions that can help you test your idea and find out more details. The answers should help you design an adequate chair for this person.

Make sure you ask *open-ended* questions – these are questions that start with a question word (e.g. why, when, ...) and cannot be answered with yes or no. Write down all the questions you can think of:

Questions	Answers
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.



Find a partner. Together, act out an **interview** with the person you have chosen and use all the questions you have written down. Write down the answers next to your questions. Now change roles.



Are you playing the person who is being interviewed? Try to put yourself in her/his place. Read through the empathy map once more. Adjust your body language, your facial expressions and your voice to the role you are playing – just like an actress/actor would.

Tips for mindful listening (for the interviewer):

- Turn towards the person you are interviewing.
- Look at her/him directly.
- Listen closely and express your interest by smiling and nodding.
- If you are not sure whether you have understood an answer correctly, ask again.



You can practise mindful listening. The **A2 Expert Challenge** contains index cards with exercises for this purpose (free download at http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/learning_holistic_learning/).



3.1. Define the need clearly



Find out what exactly is required. Which needs should be met?

People require certain things so they can feel at ease – we call these “needs”. Our needs include security, recognition, physical well-being and many more. If our needs are not met, this results in negative feelings.



Take some time to think about the interview from **Exercise 2.3**. (You can learn many things by asking **questions**). Carefully read through the answers you have written down. What does the person require? Which needs can you identify?



You will find examples of needs in the word cloud. Mark all the needs that are important for the person you have interviewed.



Fill in a **needs statement** for the person you have chosen.

Name of the person:

She/he needs

because



In the **A2 Empathy Challenge** you will learn about many different needs and will practise telling others what you need. You will also learn to empathise with others and to guess what they could be needing (free download at http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/mutual_understanding_giraffe_tool_box/).



4.1. "Brainstorming" – a storm of ideas



Let your thoughts roam freely. Any ideas are welcome and permissible in brainstorming. Select the most promising idea, ask for feedback and follow your gut feeling.



You have identified the challenge and defined the need. Now we need to find a good solution. Take 10 minutes to come up with as many ideas as possible and write them down.

The most important rules:

- The more ideas, the better.
- Even "wild" or "crazy" ideas are welcome.
- Write or draw each idea on a fresh post-it.



Together, try to "cluster" your ideas. This means sorting through your ideas and summarising similar thoughts.

4.2. Find your best idea



Which idea could make life easier for the person you have chosen and help her/him confront the challenges she/he faces? Decide on one idea. Read through the needs statement once more. Choose the idea that best meets the person's needs.



The following methods can help you decide on an idea:

- Trust your instincts and choose the idea that you find the most appealing. This is also called "following your gut feeling".
- Show your ideas to others. Together, have a quick vote about all the ideas.
- Ask others to rate how much they like each of your ideas on a scale from 0 to 10. Make a list of the ideas that get the highest scores. By yourself, select one of these ideas.

0

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10

You have chosen the following idea:





5.1. Create a prototype



Draw, build or otherwise create a prototype. A prototype is a quick and simple representation of your idea. It will help you explain your idea to others more easily.

Prototypes can be many things: a drawing, something you have built, a role play, a video – anything that is suitable for presenting your idea to others and making them understand it better. Sometimes you may not have all the materials you would like to use for your prototype – in these cases, you will need to be creative.



Use one or more of the following options to create your prototype.
You will have only 10 minutes each.



1. Draw your prototype. The more detailed and self-explanatory your drawing is, the better.

2. Build your prototype from LEGO bricks.



3. Use various materials – such as newspapers, cardboard, string, wood, wire, corks, wool, etc. – to build your prototype.



Prototypes are a way of testing your idea and learning more about it.



5.2. Present your prototype



Present your prototype and ask for feedback. Assess the feedback and – if necessary – get more information.



Prepare a short presentation (no more than 2 minutes) about your prototype. Make sure you answer all the questions below.

Describe your idea:

For whom did you develop it?	
Which needs did you identify for this person?	
How did you come up with your idea?	

Describe your prototype:

What does your prototype do?	
How does it work?	
What are its advantages?	
What might still need improvement?	



Ask for feedback. How could you change your prototype to make it even better?

- Could you reassemble its components?
- Could you make some parts bigger or smaller?
- Could you remove or add something?
- Could you change its form (colour, shape, materials, ...)?
- Could you use environmentally friendly materials?
- Could you combine your prototype with another prototype?
- Could your prototype be used for something else as well?



5.3. Develop your prototype further



Think about whether or not you want to change your prototype. If you do, you can go back to any of the previous steps and reconsider, scrutinise or change your decisions – as often as you want.



Your classmates have given you feedback and have inspired you to come up with new ideas. Are their suggestions helpful to you? Do you yourself have any more ideas about how to improve your prototype?

If so, sketch your new and improved prototype below:

My new and improved prototype
(photo, drawing, description, ...)

If not:

- Maybe the solution does not match the problem? Go back to Step 2.
- Do you need more answers? Go back to Step 3.
- Maybe the need is not defined clearly enough? Go back to Step 4.
- Do you need to start over with fresh ideas? Go back to Step 5.



Do you feel like making your idea come true? In the **A2 Lemonade Stand Challenge** you will learn step by step how to get from an idea to a finished product and how to sell that product (http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/be_part_of_a_sales_team/).



Is your product made from recycled materials? In the **A2 Trash Value Challenge** you will learn how to add new value to waste materials (http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/mindful_waste_management/).



6.1. Develop an idea for someone in your class



Look around you! Which problems, needs or opportunities do you see? Use them as starting points for changes and new, creative solutions.

You have tried the *Design Thinking* method with an invented person and have designed an adequate chair for her/him. Now explore your immediate surroundings. Choose someone from your class and find out what you could design for her/him.



Describe her or him on a story card.
Show the story card to someone in your class
and ask them to add their own ideas.



What might she/he need the most?



Something to help them find their
keys in a big school bag.



Something to pack their lunch well
so they can bring it to school.



Something to help them study.



Something that supports them
in any other way.



Go through all the steps of *Design Thinking*
from the start (see diagram on the next page).
In the end you will have a prototype for
something that will make life a little easier
for someone in your class.

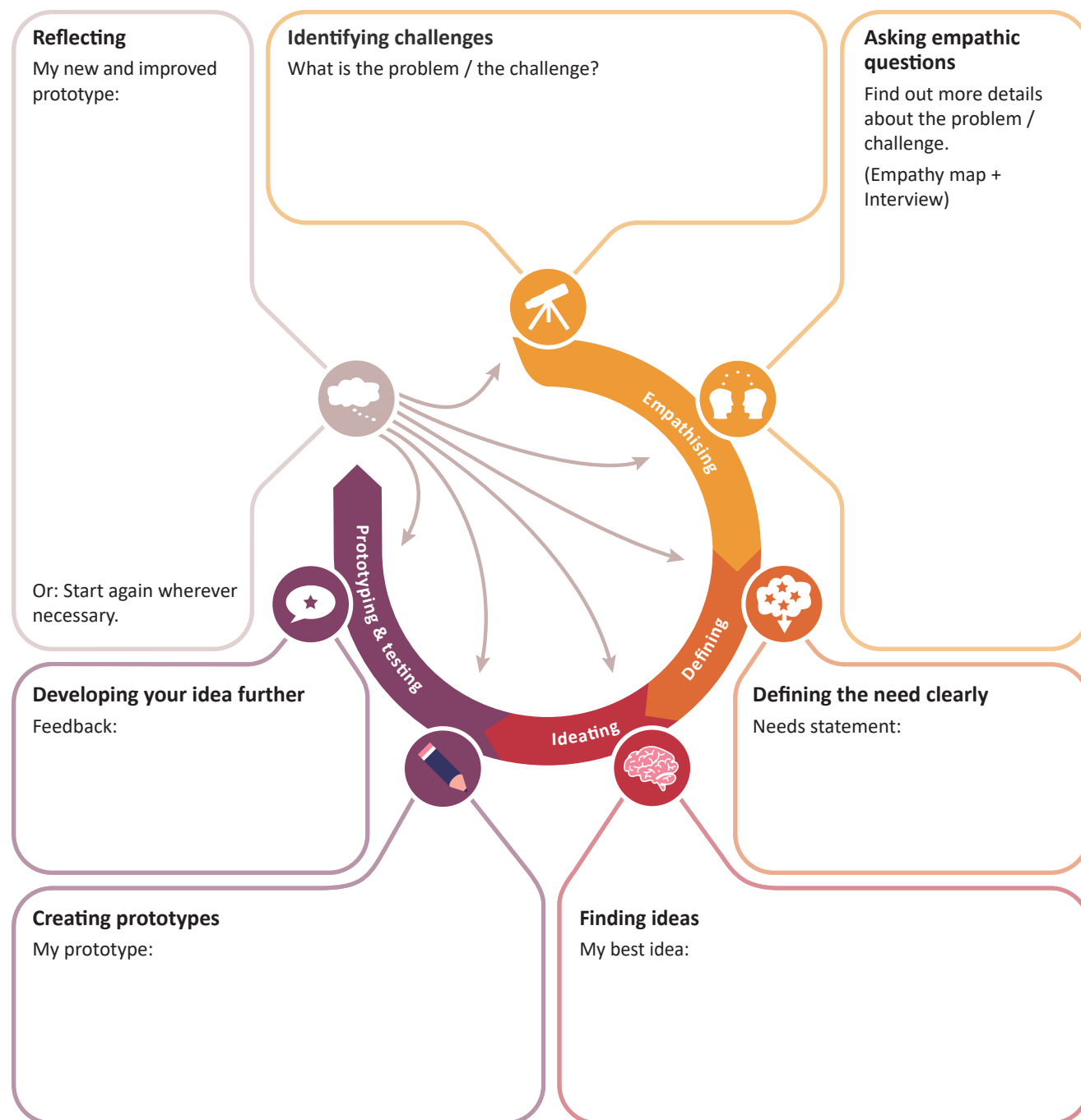


Instead of acting it out you can do a real interview
this time. The Teacher Guide contains some
examples of interview questions.

Story card for _____



6.2. Restart the *Design Thinking* process



You can also use *Design Thinking* to develop ideas for the environment or for our planet. For this purpose you will need a profound understanding of the needs of others and respect for all living creatures. You can exercise these skills by asking empathic questions.



In the **A2 My Community Challenge** you will learn to take an active role in shaping your surroundings while protecting the environment and searching for sustainable solutions (http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/the_17_sustainable_development_goals_and_how_to_contribute/).



7.1. Questionnaire for the Idea Challenge

You have empathised with others and have found out which problems and needs they might have. You have learned many things by asking empathic questions. You have come up with many creative ideas and have chosen the best. You have created a prototype to explain your idea. You have presented your idea and have used feedback from others to develop it further.

1. What was the best thing about this challenge for you? What was the most difficult thing?	
2. How did you find out what others might need?	
3. What did you change about your idea when you created the prototype?	
4. How did the feedback for your prototype help you?	
5. What did you change about your idea after the feedback?	
6. For what will you use the <i>Design Thinking</i> method next?	



Talk about your answers.



7.2. How well can you do that already?



Carefully read the sentences below and think about how well you can do these things.
Mark the area under the symbol that fits the best.

Here is what the four symbols mean:



I can do that in most cases.



I can do that in some cases.



I can rarely do that.



I need a lot more practice for that.

I can identify challenges in everyday life.				
I can empathise with others, for instance through an empathy map.				
I can identify the problems and needs of others.				
I can come up with questions that can help me learn more about a person.				
I can conduct an interview.				
I can suggest many ideas when brainstorming.				
I can follow my gut feeling and choose a good idea.				
I can choose the best from several ideas that have been assessed by others.				
I can explain my idea to others very well with my prototype.				
I can make others understand how my prototype works.				
I can accept suggestions from others on how to improve my idea.				
I can use these suggestions for improvement to develop my idea further.				
I can get more information if I find that my idea is not working yet.				

Sources:

- Chairs exercise: Devon Young, Scott Doorley, Grace Hawthorne & the Quarterly Co. Team
https://dschool.stanford.edu/groups/k12/wiki/17761/5_Chairs_Exercise.html
- Empathy map: B1 Empathy Challenge (www.youthstart.eu),
https://dschool.stanford.edu/groups/k12/wiki/3d994/Empathy_Map.html

Additional materials:

- “Entrepreneurship Challenge” at <https://flipchallenge.at/> (e-learning tool for the Idea Challenge – financial education with the FLiP Challenges for children and adolescents ages 10 and up) - German only

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Empowering Youth is a holistic learning programme for lower secondary school students. It is part of the “Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges” programme.

All **competence levels (from A1 = primary level to B2 = secondary level II)** can be downloaded for free at www.youthstart.eu in **German, English** and, in some cases, in five other languages.

The “**Mind & Body**” section provides short video clips with physical “activate & concentrate” exercises and the *Youth Start mindfulness programme*.



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