

SIAT

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This will help create a deeper understanding on why design thinking is like a cheat code to solving any and all problems. And another part that I would like to add about design thinking is like, uncertainty is something that we face a lot in, in the real life. When we were growing up in our school, there's one one right answer to one question. But now when we come to the real life, everything seems uncertain. There's, there are multiple answers to a lot of problems. And we don't know which one's the right answer. So if you know understand design thinking, it will help you follow a process, follow steps, and also make you comfortable with uncertainty. That's my viewpoint about design thinking.

M Megan Yeung 06:17

You know, if we take what you just mentioned to us about design thinking, I'm gonna give you kind of a scenario, a POV, roleplay scenario. Okay? So, I have an app, I'm going to make it easy. I have a food delivery app. Okay, called Food Dash.

E Eric Lee 06:32

That sounds fun. Okay.

M Megan Yeung 06:44

Totally original name.

E Eric Lee 06:45

Very, very nice.

M Megan Yeung 06:46

Okay. However, I've been looking at my app reviews. And, you know, users are saying, I kind of prefer, Leap the Dishes over this app, you know, this, this app is kind of lacking and things. And so say, I'm a client that comes to you, I'm like, Eric help me, I don't know why my app is not working. I don't know why people prefer the other app. But if we relate this to design thinking, maybe this is a little broad, and you can narrow it down. But if we apply design thinking to the situation, how would you go about it?

E Eric Lee 07:28

Right. That's a very interesting scenario gave me because that is also very common situation a lot of people a lot of companies or a lot of products are at. So first, I'll go back to those users. People who are complaining people who say they prefer this over my own product, go interview them, talk to them, observe them using our product and use and observe them using the other product, then you'll get insights to why your product's not working or your product's not helping your users solve the need. Then we can go to the second cycle, which is ideating, and



Megan Yeung 11:22

Yeah. To add on. I remember when I first entered SIAT, I was like, wow, like, they teach a variety of things. And for the longest time, I was like, Why? Why do they do that? But now that you mentioned that, you know, it kind of trains us to be a jack of all trades and it's an advantage when we enter the workforce definitely makes a lot more sense. And when you mentioned communication, it's just funny how the biggest lesson that we learned from SIAT is not deliberately taught. It's kind of more of the skills you learn when you're working in a team. But yeah, those are very good insights. For your Co-Op. If you could talk a little bit about that.

Eric Lee 12:07

Yes, I unfortunately, was not able to do Co-Op officially, because I was lacking time. So I did internships. So it was not exactly Co-Op, but it was job experience on the side while I was studying. But yeah, doesn't matter. I got experience, basically. And that experience was honestly the start of everything. Because all of these skills were there. I had them. I just didn't know how to put them together. So when I got my first job, I was working for my friend's startup company, Meaningful Work. I was their lead designer. And I thought initially, I knew everything I need to know to start and help that company. But then once I started working, I found out I didn't know anything. I mean, I mean, I knew things, but I didn't know how to apply them. Then I had to self educate myself a lot. I went to different UX design communities, I got tried to get mentorship, I went to workshops, I looked up online, watch a lot of YouTube videos just to find out what exactly does a UX designer do? How do we apply all this knowledge and skills that I have. So I had to do that all by myself for a really long time, which made me by the end of it, which made me really confident as a designer, trying to break into the job market as a full time. In fact, if anything, once I got my first interview, like that was basically I got the job. I knew what I was doing, I was more confident into applying and going into the interview. That's what sets me apart compared to everybody else.

Megan Yeung 13:48

You know, when it comes to school, SIAT, you know, I feel like people learn differently. Some people learn better by reading textbooks, and you know, studying, some people learn better hands on like myself. And so to the people who are listening, you know, if you do seem to struggle in your courses, sometimes maybe Co-Op would be a great option for you. And like Eric mentioned, you'll learn a lot of things that you may not learn in your courses. But of course, the many things you learn at SIAT, you can also learn to apply them to your job or whatever work you will be doing, which transitions us to wanting to talk about passion and work, meaning I think for a lot of people, it's not just about the work, it's about the passion and the meaning behind it. I think that's what sets people apart.

Right. Very good question. Firj ig



Megan Yeung 18:44

No, yeah, definitely. You call it selfish. But I think that's how a lot of people learn. You just kind of tell yourself, you're a teacher and you're a master at it. And then eventually you will become a master at it.

Eric Lee 18:57

Right? Fake it till you make it. It's very common. That's that's how it is like you people, a lot of people don't believe it. But this is how everybody works in the industry in the entire like tech industry. But yeah, coming back to when I was teaching. So you say I'm passionate about UX design, but I'm actually passionate about solving solving problems and meeting needs more UX design is I feel like is a way I could impact and affect solving problems at a higher level. That's why I that's why I was really passionate about learning more and more about it and going through it. Now when I was teaching it, it made me realize there was a need for what I was teaching it which in turn inspired me to experiment with different types and styles of teaching. And to figure out how to help people with this need in the best way possible because I love solving problems. I love meeting needs of people in the best way possible using especially design thinking and all that. It just mutually benefits each other, you're not, when you're teaching and educating you don't you're not just helping your students grow, you're helping yourself grow, as well. Be it as a person, be it as a UX design be as, as a communicator, all that.

Megan Yeung 20:16

Yeah, definitely. I can relate to that, because I'm an art teacher for little kids.

Eric Lee 20:23

That's awesome. That's amazing.

Megan Yeung 20:25

And obviously, I love drawing. I love art. But definitely the aspect of like, teaching future artists. For me, it feels like I'm like a older sister who's kind of guiding them through techniques, skills, and in a way kind of transform into even more meaningful work, where you kind of become a mentor, you provide like a good space for your students to learn. So I definitely relate to you. In terms of mentorship, I'm not sure how common it is in the industry. But do you think there needs to be more mentorship?

Eric Lee 21:08

Oh, yes, definitely. Mentorship is definitely important. It's actually UX mentorship is very popular right now. But I would even emphasize on giving the right kind of mentorship that truly connects a mentor with the mentees needs. Because a lot of time when somebody is giving mentorship to somebody, for a mentee, they they just gloss over surface level. They don't feel

connected, they don't really understand what the student who came to them need or want. Also, the mentee might have some unreasonable requests, like they're literally asking your mentor to do your job for you, at a certain point. So yeah, I'm currently working on a lot of things on how do I fix that? How do I provide the right kind of mentorship for mentees? And how do we how do I provide a platform for mentors and mentees to connect in the proper way, which was exactly what I found, actually, in my UX hackathon that I hosted. I was at a UX hackathon last year called from VXP as a club from SFU. One of the really great results that came out of that was, I accidentally put a experience mentor in a team of complete newbies. And they of course, like they won some prize at the end. But when it came to getting feedback, the mentees were told got back to me and told me they loved the fact that they had a person who was more experienced in the field help guide them and work with them towards a common objective for that given time, which was about 24 to 26 hours. And they learned skills and learned processes and communication that this is something you learn outside of your school in the workforce, even then it's like still very hard to get. So just putting, just getting a guidance with an experienced UX designer, working towards a common goal, that refinement is what is always missing. After you graduate, a school, your university get a bachelor's or even boot camps, that refinement is very much needed that recruiters look for in the field.

M

Megan Yeung 23:23

And when you talk about education, you also mentioned marketing yourself, which already kind of shows the entrepreneurial mindset you have. Regarding that this is just an observation on my own, but I find that if you compare SIAT students, to Beedie students, we're quite different. We're not as outgoing. We don't really touch grass that much. We kind of keep to ourselves. And so how important of a role does having that entrepreneurial mindset play in your career journey? Or would you advertise it as an essential trait that SIAT students who are looking to pursue UX design or careers surrounding that? Should they have that trait?

E

Eric Lee 24:14

Yes, 100% SIAT out students are extremely talented, and they get to experience all these projects and work they do just refines their skills even further. In fact, a lot of my friends they came out with with degrees in business or environmental health science and all that, and they wish that they graduated from SIAT instead. So just being able to put yourself out there being able to market yourself in some form of way even just like a little bit that will put you leaps and bounds further in your career.

M

Megan Yeung 24:50

Yeah. I feel like a lot of SIAT students have impostor syndrome. So here's a confirmation that you're all very talented.

E

Eric Lee 24:58

Yes. 100% even in the current job market, you all think your designs are nothing, there are people that are so much better. There are people in your class that are doing so much better has amazing designs. Don't worry about all that you're still great as a designer because in the



has amazing designs. Don't worry about all that you're still great as a designer, because in the real world, you don't need something that's that pretty that beautiful. People just need something that works. And we're more than capable of providing and meeting that need.

Megan Yeung 25:25

Mm hmm. You better write that down SIAT students. And, you know, talking about marketing yourself, a portfolio would come with that, right? You know, even when people are preparing for Co-Op, we have to create a portfolio. And this is more technical tips, but how do you create a portfolio that will make you stand out from others? Because obviously, the market is incredibly saturated right now.

Eric Lee 25:52

Yes, right.

Megan Yeung 25:52

And so how do you create that portfolio that that employer is gonna be "Yeah, that's the one".

Eric Lee 26:01

Basically treat it treat your portfolio like a, like a project, treat it like design thinking project. See who you're trying to work for, what industry are trying to work at. What skills would they value? What skills do you have that you want to put out there? And how to best display your skills? Keep all these in mind and think about showing and displaying your process, have a process build a process, first of all, and that process could easily be the design thinking process that I mentioned before. And people love that. People love that you don't just like blindly go in and come up with designs. People love seeing you have a process and have a reason to every design or visual or element that you you have put up. And never be afraid to talk about your work because it's your work, you should be proud of your work. If nobody if you're not going to be proud of your work, nobody else is going to be. That that would be my advice.

Megan Yeung 27:05

Yeah, that's great advice because maybe it's this is because you know, the fear of unknown, just not knowing what to expect when we graduate. But I feel like, you know, a lot of students look for step by step, cos now, a lot of



Stacey Copeland 29:34

Stacy returned for a brand new episode of FCAT after school, hitting your feeds every other Wednesday this season. A big thanks to Eric Lee for joining us here on the show. You'll find links and resources mentioned and more info on Eric and the SIAT program in the show notes. Our hosts for this episode was Megan Yeung. Production is by Megan Yeung and me Stacy Copeland. FCAT after Your school respectfully acknowledges the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our three campuses reside, and where many of the stories shared in our series take place. Make sure to rate and subscribe to the show.