YPAR NEXUS

RESOURCE

Charting Your Course: Problem Statement

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Problem Statement

Develop a Problem Statement

A problem statement is a clear and focused statement that describes a challenge or issue you intend to address. A well-developed problem statement can help to guide your research and solution development.

1. Review your data.
- ➡ Analyze the data you've collected through empathy map, interviews, shadowing, surveys, document analysis, and/or other methods.

2. Identify key themes and patterns.
- ➡ Look for recurring issues, challenges, or concerns.

3. Use the five W's to develop your problem statement.

WHO: Who is affected by the problem?

WHAT: What exactly is the problem?

WHEN: When does the problem occur?

WHERE: Where does the problem occur?

WHY: Why is this a problem?

HOW: How does the problem show up?

- ➡ Frame the problem in a way that suggests potential solutions.
- ➡ When possible, use quantifiable terms to describe the problem (e.g., "a 20% increase in vaping").
- ➡ Avoid blame or judgment (i.e., no accusatory language)
- ➡ Share your problem statement with those the problem affects most and ask for feedback.

Example:

Problem: *The 27% increase found in reports of anxiety and depression found among high school students in our school district during the 2023-24 school year, as well as the limited access to mental health resources, is contributing to a decline in academic performance, social well-being, and overall quality of student life.*

This problem statement clearly identifies the target group (high school students), the problem (anxiety, depression), the impact (declines in academic performance, social well-being, quality of life), and the context (school district). It avoids suggesting solutions, allowing for a broad range of potential solutions.