

Contemporary Challenges: Making a Difference

<https://sway.office.com/AFMVHx1Da5c2c6ib?ref=Link>

1. The Biggest Threat to Mankind

Today is the future. The repercussions of climate change on our world are getting worse and worse every day. As they occur more frequently, extreme weather events like heatwaves, droughts, and flooding destroy homes, habitats, and agriculture. According to World Wildlife Fund (2021), climate change has had an impact on how we live and our ability to alongside these issues. Therefore, I believe climate change and our ability to adapt is the biggest threat to mankind.

Both the fish in our waters and half of the land on our planet have been cultivated by humans. The Royal Society (2013) estimates that our wildlife and animal populations have decreased by 60% in the past fifty years. That is more than half. They continue by outlining the significance of a biodiverse planet. According to the World Wildlife Fund (2021), biodiversity is the presence of a wide range of organisms in a single area and environment. The Royal Society (2013) found that biodiversity is what will establish stability, aid in maintaining balance, and support life. The world as we know it cannot function and will perish without this balance. We are lacking in biodiversity, with the United Kingdom lacking severely in ranges of wildlife and animals.

The Anthropocene (age of the humans) is now. United Nations (2022) describe this period as being human-influenced. There is disagreement among scientists as to whether the planet's warming is a result of humans or other factors. However, some experts believe that atmospheric gases have an impact on rising temperatures through the greenhouse effect. According to NASA (2022), although some experts feel that human activity is not the primary driver of climate change, there is still a possibility of significant, irreparable harm that cannot be discounted. Instead, NASA (2022) argues that planning and averting irreparable damage should be done right away. Today is the future. So how can we build a world where nature and people can coexist? We must become more aware of what is happening locally and globally. In order to change things, we must take on the task head-on. According to Met Office (2018), we need to look for methods to change the way we do things and try to mitigate some of our influence. We need to reduce our impact so that everything we do, we can continue to forever. The Grantham Institute (2022), states there are four goals we must enforce in order to make a change and impact on climate change for our future. These goals are related to Fuel, food, our oceans and wildlife. These four goals are supported and further explained by Denchak (2022) as follows; Firstly, to reduce the burning of fossil fuels will allow warming of the planet to slow and create cleaner air. Second, reducing waste and having efficient food production whilst reducing our consumption of meat will also be beneficial to us and our planet. Next, we need to take responsibility for our oceans reducing the amount we pollute with different forms of waste. World Wildlife Fund (2021) suggests creating 'no fish zones', and finally taking care to look after and preserve the wildlife we have left.

The future of the environment and humanity is now in our hands. For us to continue living on Earth as we know it, sustainability must be attained. We need to start accepting responsibility for the effects of climate change and global warming, not dismiss obvious warning signs like extreme weather conditions, and search for methods to lower our carbon footprint. Humans are and have long been out of harmony with nature. We must alter our lifestyles if we want life to go on as we know it to avoid the extinction of humanity.

2. Skills to Combat Climate Change

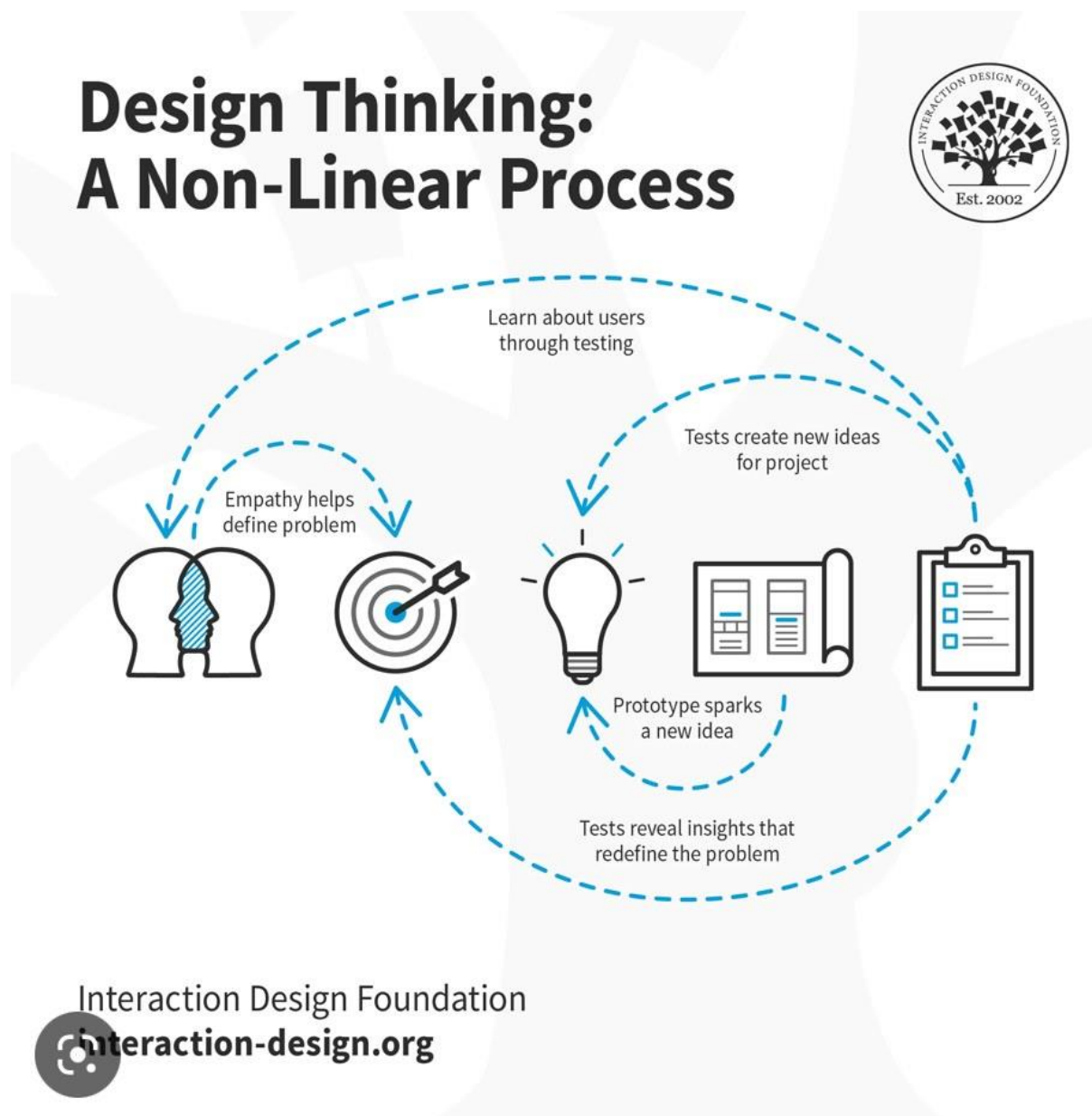
Climate change is the problem of today, not the Future. In order for the obstacles we face with climate change to be mitigated, it is important to educate our future generation, as well as today's society, the necessary skills to combat the issues relating to climate change and the future of our planet. Two skills I believe to be important to attain and improve on through life are, critical thinking and the ability to influence.

Making observations, analysing information, drawing conclusions, communicating ideas, and solving problems are all aspects of critical thinking. Individuals must be able to question their own ideas and those of others in order to challenge presumptions and come up with the best solutions to address challenges related to climate change. This means they must be able to think beyond their own prejudices and individual judgements, acting on objective reasoning over one's immediate emotional reaction. According to OECD Education and Skills Today (2022), this will enable us to develop and assess various approaches to climate change. As we rationally connect the information and consider what the greatest possible solution would be, critical thinking enables us to spot contradictions and mistakes in earlier ideas. This, according to Vaughter (2016), can help us link local initiatives and actions to larger processes in relation to the environmental, social, and economic consequences of climate change. We can proceed from analysis to methodical climate change action if we can think critically. Earth (2020) demonstrates this further by using the example of developing technical solutions to address ocean pollution and being able to discuss the advantages, drawbacks, and underlying presumptions that these solutions are founded on.

The second skill important to combat climate change issues is having the ability to influence. Speaking confidently and with confidence is what it means to be assertive. According to Mcbrowne (2018), being assertive is necessary, but it's also crucial that the opinions and information presented are factual, trustworthy, and not based on prejudices or false or misleading information. We know the issues with false climate change assumptions. Lacina (2022) takes this further explaining gathering false evidence and information will only cause harm to your influential power. It is essential to evaluate who the information has come from, what it is saying, when and where it has been published, why it has been written and what evidence it is supported by. Being able to trust your own judgement, direction, and objectives while remaining persistent is also essential for becoming an influential individual. This may be in this you do to reduce your personal carbon footprint, by doing things such as reducing food waste or using renewable energy as explained by Denchak (2022), or when leading others globally to mitigate climate change.

To summarise, critical and analytical thinking skills are crucial for everyone who wants to successfully promote addressing the threat posed by climate change. It will give us the chance to make better decisions, sharpen our research skills, improve our ability to solve problems, and help inspire ideas and solutions to stop climate change. Also, it is essential to be able to persuade others of the realities of climate change and the responsibilities and action that must be taken. You must be conscious of your own prejudices, judgements, and false or misleading information, as explained by Center for Creative Leadership (2017). The capacity for critical thinking and the capacity for persuasion go hand in hand.

3. Design-Thinking



Design-Thinking: What is it? A method to problem-solving known as "design thinking" implements innovation focusing on client demands. It differs from previous problem-solving frameworks since it is both user-centric and solutions-based. A positive mindset and set of skills are necessary for effective design thinking. According to Cote (2022), mindset refers to how we see and comprehend

our surroundings, whereas skillset describes how we act and behave. To use the design thinking technique effectively, you must have the right mindset and skill set.

There are 5 stages to design thinking. Empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test. Globally, design thinking is applied in both the classroom and the workplace. The benefits of employing design thinking include the ability to describe the issue at hand and then find better solutions. People must have an open mind in order to appreciate larger contexts and concerns that they may not have previously considered or that are outside of their own prejudices and judgements. Seeing patterns and connections in the data will help you define the issue and potential remedies down the road. Using design thinking effectively enables you to revisit earlier phases and expand on concepts. The diagram above shows the variations of movement within the design thinking method. However, according to Kelley (2019), some may argue that design thinking requires compromise and negotiation, which some individuals may find difficult. Individuals may not take well to having their ideas critiqued or others wanting to find and use a different solution. Due to this, people may not feel confident to keep putting ideas forward. Marketing Department (2019) takes this point further explaining that you must be open to constructive criticism to be persistent. Persistence is key to finding the best solution.

To conclude, design thinking is a great way to define a problem and find the best solution however, individuals must make sure that they are open-minded, accepting that their ideas will be built on or that there may be a better solution.

References:

Part 1

Denchak, M. (2022). *How You Can Stop Global Warming*. [online] NRDC. Available at: <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/how-you-can-stop-global-warming> [Accessed 23 Mar. 2023].

Met Office (2018). *What is climate change?* [online] Met Office. Available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/climate-change/what-is-climate-change> [Accessed 22 Mar. 2023].

NASA (2022). *The Effects of Climate Change*. [online] Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. Available at: <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/> [Accessed 22 Mar. 2023].

The Grantham Institute (2022). *9 things you can do about climate change*. [online] www.imperial.ac.uk. Available at: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/stories/climate-action/> [Accessed 23 Mar. 2023].

The Royal Society (2013). *Climate change: Evidence and Causes* / Royal Society. [online] The Royal Society. Available at: <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/climate-change-evidence-causes/basics-of-climate-change/> [Accessed 23 Mar. 2023].

United Nations (2022). *What is Climate Change?* [online] United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change> [Accessed 22 Mar. 2023].

WWF (2021). *Effects of Climate Change*. [online] World Wildlife Fund. Available at: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/effects-of-climate-change> [Accessed 24 Mar. 2023].

Part 2

Center for Creative leadership (2017). *4 Keys to Strengthen Your Ability to Influence Others* | CCL. [online] Center for Creative Leadership. Available at: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/4-keys-strengthen-ability-influence-others/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Denchak, M. (2022). *How You Can Stop Global Warming*. [online] NRDC. Available at: <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/how-you-can-stop-global-warming> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Earth, S. (2020). *What is Critical Thinking?* [online] Spaceship Earth. Available at: https://www.spaceshipearth.org.uk/post/what-is-critical-thinking?gclid=CjwKCAjw5pShBhB_EiwAvmnNV5xI293EBoCLu9u1OOLQVywte06xbEe37D3tjXpKWpBmduvaUjjXZBoCLVkJQAvD_BwE [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Lacina, L. (2022). *Al gore, climate policy and giving leaders the push they need to make change*. [online] World Economic Forum. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/02/al-gore-climate-policy-leadership-skills-climate-change/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Mcbrown, J. (2018). *What is influence and what are influencing skills?* [online] Roffey Park Institute. Available at: <https://www.roffeypark.ac.uk/knowledge-and-learning-resources-hub/what-is-influence-and-what-are-influencing-skills/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

OECD Education and Skills Today (2022). *Creativity, critical thinking & climate education for the green transition*. [online] OECD Education and Skills Today. Available at: <https://oecdeditoday.com/creativity-and-climate-education/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Sharma, R. (2022). *6 Amazing Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking Skills*. [online] Emeritus Online Courses. Available at: <https://emeritus.org/blog/career-what-is-critical-thinking/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Vaughter, P. (2016). *Climate Change Education: From Critical Thinking to Critical Action*. [online] United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS). Available at: <https://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/sites/default/files/UNU-IAS%20PB%204%20-%208FEB%20-%20for%20printing2.pdf> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2023].

Part 3

Cote, C. (2022). *Why Learn Design Thinking? 6 Career Benefits*. [online] Business Insights Blog. Available at: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/why-learn-design-thinking> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2023].

Dam, R. (2019). *5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process*. [online] The Interaction Design Foundation. Available at: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/5-stages-in-the-design-thinking-process> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2023].

Kelley, B. (2019). *8 Design Thinking Flaws and How to Fix Them* | CustomerThink. [online] customerthink.com. Available at: <https://customerthink.com/8-design-thinking-flaws-and-how-to-fix-them/> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2023].

Marketing Department (2019). *Innovate with Design Thinking: pros and cons*. [online] Zeratech.com. Available at: <https://www.zeratech.com/en/design-thinking-innovate-pros-cons/> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2023].

Tsoi, J. (2021). *What are the flaws of Design Thinking?* [online] Medium. Available at: <https://uxdesign.cc/what-are-the-flaws-of-design-thinking-83e22213232a> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2023].