How might we help teachers become innovators and designers of learning experiences in their classrooms while creating new methods for professional development? How can we develop a movement that reframes the role of teachers in our schools and society?

We have been working on ways to embed design thinking processes into schools with IDEO for the last ten years. Our first step in that direction, with support from The Ford Foundation, was to create the Design Thinking Toolkit for Educators (designthinkingforeducators.com) with IDEO and to host conferences for educators. This gave us the confidence to believe that we could create a product that could help other schools.

That work allowed us to think how could Riverdale be of greater service to the broader educational community. We founded Plussed+ a learning design studio that helps develop tools and services for schools.

One of the bolder initiatives of Plussed+ is the Teachers Guild, a learning design studio that helps develop tools and services for schools. The Teachers Guild is an initiative of Plussed+. The Teachers Guild platform is an initiative of Plussed+. The Teachers Guild allows teachers across the nation in all sorts of different schools—independent, charter, and public—to redesign schools, classrooms and systems creatively in response to specific challenges. Our overall belief is that it is imperative for independent schools, public schools and charter schools in the US and across the globe. We believe that it is our duty to educate our students to the best of our abilities while shaping our practices. This is why we founded Plussed+ which then helped us develop the Teachers Guild.

We have had donors who are interested in having Riverdale play a part in the broader efforts to change education and they have helped fund these initiatives. We developed the Design Thinking Toolkit for Educators and that was successful. This inspired us to develop an incubator called Plussed+. The Teachers Guild platform is an initiative of Plussed+. The Teachers Guild platform launched last year and now has over 800 teachers engaged in its work. It has been successful, but we would like to reach more teachers. Several of my teachers have been instrumental in helping it develop and have worked as coaches on the platform. Plussed+ has one full-time manager and about six Riverdale faculty with some faculty from other schools involved in helping develop its ideas for products and services. We will be announcing a fellowship for students and teachers soon to help them take their ideas to the next level.

This journey involved changing courses a number of times and reframing what we were doing.

We have done much work on interdisciplinary studies, on design thinking, on character strengths. If we are really intent to live our mission of empowering lifelong learners by developing minds, building character and creating community in order to change our world for the good, then we need to model that as faculty members and institutionally. Hence our overall belief is imperative for teachers to be leaders in education broadly, for independent schools, public schools and charter school in the US and across the globe. We believe that it is our duty to educate our students to the best of our abilities while shaping our practices. This is why we founded Plussed+ which then helped us develop the Teachers Guild.

The Teachers Guild allows teachers across the nation in all sorts of different schools—independent, charter, and public—to redesign schools, classrooms and systems creatively in response to specific challenges.

We are helping teachers redefine their profession into a creative force for our students, schools and communities.

RESOURCES

TEACHERS GUILD PRESENTATION
https://goo.gl/4xm1yF

TEACHERS GUILD WEBSITES
https://teachersguild.org
https://teachersguild.edu

TEACHERS GUILD TWITTER
@TeachersGuild