

BRONXVILLE CASE STUDY

MOVING FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

Bronxville School NY
2020 -2021

Enrusk is a world leader in Design Thinking. We help people to think differently and change the way they choose to work as individuals, as part of a team and as part of an organisation.

Context

In January 2021, Bronxville Union Free School District and EnRusk came together again, this time, to address the Covid-19 crisis and its impact on the classroom. Building on the work that EnRusk had begun with them before the pandemic, the two continued their exploration on the importance of designing solutions that would lead to the forming of stronger connections in the classroom. Teacher to student, student to teacher, and student to student.

A topic that carries more weight now than ever before, considering the further isolation individuals in the school community have all experienced over the last 12 months.

Bronxville is already one of the highest-ranked high schools in the United States, but they continually strive to be better. While many schools have treated the global crisis as a disruption to the way we "normally do things" with EnRusk's help, Bronxville saw this disruption as an opportunity. An opportunity to innovate by asking, "What have we learned? How do we identify and celebrate the pockets of innovation that have happened? How do we share this out on a broader scale to benchmark our innovations and continually move forward?"

The Goal

Bronxville enlisted the team at EnRusk to help them ensure that empathy was central to their journey of innovation in education and leadership. The previous 12 months had been a challenge for all, and there was the feeling of disconnection, isolation leading to low morale. Our challenge was to turn that around, unite the teams, strengthen the connections, provide a platform for open dialogue, and listen and uncover the hidden gems of innovation that were happening but were just being lost. In that, we would share findings across the whole school community to help them continue their path of change and growth rather than settling for a 'return to normal' attitude.

Working closely with EnRusk, Bronxville aims to benchmark its innovations and become a school committed to empathy. Bronxville wants to become "the listening school".



How We Did It

Using a Design Thinking process, we had previously immersed the school into the status quo, revealing some previously unseen challenges and opportunities for designing innovative solutions. The Covid-19 crisis didn't shift that goal, but it did change the conversation a bit. To understand how Bronxville students and teachers felt, we helped them create multiple design teams consisting of both students, teachers, and leadership.

We then facilitated several workshops with each DT where participants interviewed each other and openly sharing some of their struggles, as well as their attempts at working in ways they had never previously considered - innovative practice. We also had participants' reflection and identify how the 12 months might have changed their perception of what 'good learning and teaching is.'

Throughout several short, dynamic online workshops, with groups of faculty and students, the Bronxville community finally talked about how they felt—what scared and excited them about the future and what things they would like to amplify, change and ditch about their current school experience. The groups listened, shared ideas, and walked away with a better understanding of themselves and each other.

From there, with EnRusk's help, we guided them in distilling their findings into emerging themes and ideate and co-design solutions and a strategic approach to build on these ideas.

What We're Most Proud Of

We used these workshops to listen to the Bronxville community and get a better sense of where they are now and where they want to go. While the Bronxville community feels the need for more human connection, they recognize how far they've come in the face of daily uncertainty and a lack of structure.

"I'm worried that we don't take anything we learned from this forward and think differently about schooling in broader terms."

EnRusk's creative team worked closely with Bronxville, building content in the form of films, animations, and slide decks to help them better tell their collective story and shared learnings to themselves and out to the world. They plan to continue exploring new ways to improve students' and teachers' lives everywhere. Bronxville is committed to continuing the partnership with EnRusk to further guide them on their journey to becoming a school dedicated to innovation, leading with compassion and empathy.

EnRusk is excited to continue to work with Bronxville and their continued support and partnership on this journey.

