



UBC POLICY STUDIO

An Innovator's Guide to Policy Design

ASK TRY DO

2021

Policy Design Handbook

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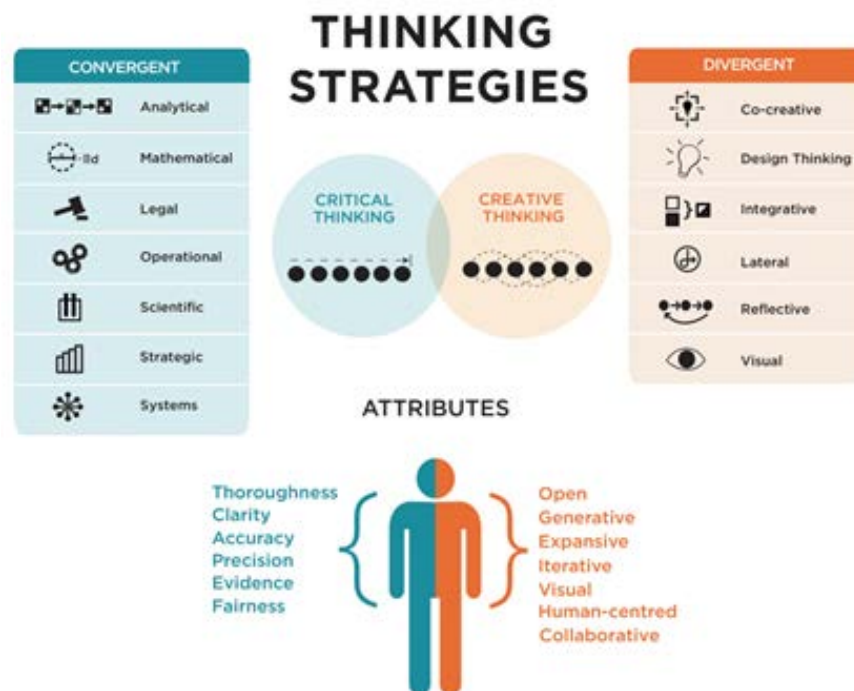
I. Background

The Policy Design Handbook is designed to assist the policy design and implementation process. In particular, it is for students in the Masters of Public Policy and Global Affairs program, as well as other students in other programs where policy is a key aspect of their passions.

The Handbook is built on the premise that a variety of diverse thinking processes are key to finding not necessarily perfect solutions, but better ways forward as we strive to gain traction on “wicked problems” which most policy challenges are. Policy problems are becoming more complex, multifaceted while showing the need for human-centric driven approaches, which is what this handbook promotes. Precedents for this Handbook include The Innovation by Design Fieldbook by Angèle Beausoleil and Moura Quayle, 2016, UBC Sauder School of Business. The Fieldbook was created as a strategic design techniques guide to creative and critical thinking and innovative actions. A more recent contribution is the Business Design Pocket Guide by Angèle Beausoleil (Rotman School of Management).

b. Thinking Strategies: Creative and Critical Thinking

There are many different thinking strategies that involve both creative and critical thinking. Both types of thinking are important in policy design. The trick or rather what needs to be learned and experienced is when to silence your critical voice and let your creative voice speak loudly – and vice-versa. That is why having a thinking process is useful – you can situate yourself in the process and either move back or forward whenever you get stuck or blocked



c. Decolonizing Policy Design

This guide is created to challenge the status quo of thinking. While it is not a replacement for local knowledge, however, the tools included in the policy steps help in challenging assumptions, rethinking the current ways of operations, while attempting to seek answers for the stakeholders or the population that will be affected by the policy implementation process. We suggest engaging with the indigenous strategic plan self-assessment tool as well as the positionality checklist

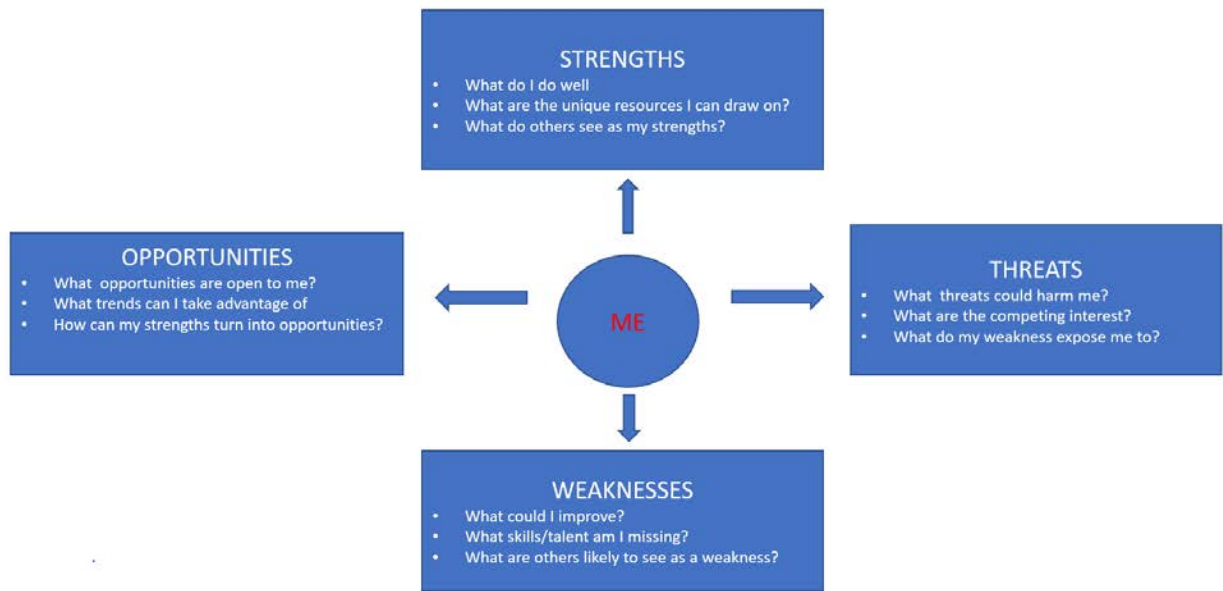
d. How to use the Policy Design Handbook: Individual and Team SWOT

This guide ideally encourages and unlocks innovative approaches to policy design. The guide includes tools that encourage a unique perspective to analyzing, resolving, and implementing public policy. The guide is purposely designed to be interdisciplinary in its approach, as well as being problem agnostic. As part of the guide, blank pages have been added to foster creativity, reflections, and refining of thoughts and ideas. Although the guide is structured symmetrically, it is intended to be used depending on the policy analysis and design steps that you are working on.

The guide can be used in three formats:

- Analog: This format includes working with the printed physical copy of the guide, meaning that annotations can be done by pen or pencil.
- Analog-Digital: This is a combination of both the digital and physical copy in tandem
- Digital: This format is used on an electronic device or PDF format

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY | PERSONAL SWOT



TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY | TEAM SWOT



II. POLICY DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

a. Introduction to strategic design: ASK. TRY. Do

Strategic design is a problem-solving, opportunity-seeking, decision-making process. It is participatory and emergent, rooted in user or stakeholder research. At their best, multidisciplinary teams blend creative and critical thinking techniques to co-create, test, and launch resilient solutions to the big picture or systemic challenges. The approach is broken down into three stages – ASK TRY DO.

ASK:

Some call it research. Others call it discovery. Still more call it just plain asking good questions. Ask is a simple word that implies important actions in design, policy, and leadership. What are the good questions to ask? When do you ask them? How do you record the answers? How do you unpack the assumptions and reveal the values? You will have lots of questions and sometimes very few answers until you Try.¹ In this phase of strategic design, it involves enquiring, discovering the policy problem, and understanding who it affects and why it happens

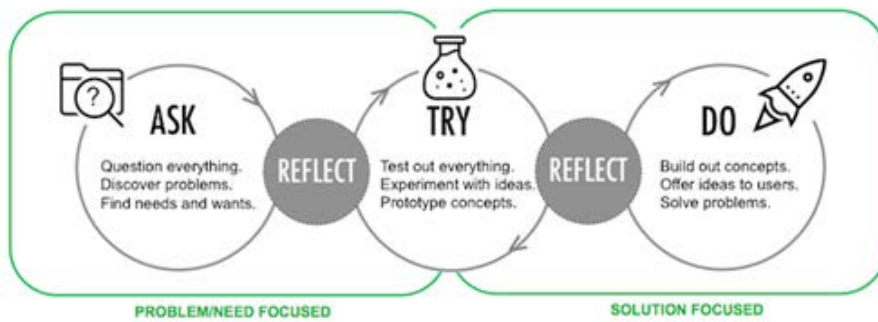
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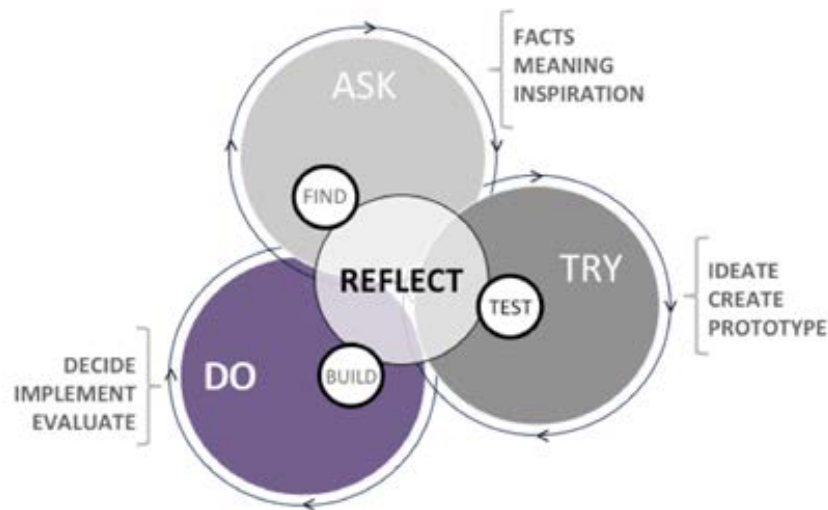
DO:

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STRATEGIC DESIGN METHOD



STRATEGIC DESIGN METHOD (SDM) QUAYLE AND BEAUSOLEIL © 2017



STRATEGIC DESIGN PROCESS CREATED BY MOURA QUAYLE AND ANGELE BEAUSOLEIL © 2015

b. Why Strategic Design and Policy Analysis Complement each other

Strategic design and policy analysis complement each other in that they are techniques for solving problems. The application of strategic design to policy analysis is the merge of strategic design principles to policy problems.

- Define the Problem/Opportunity
- Assemble Evidence/Research/Discovery
- Envisage Potential/Generate Alternatives
- Making Choices/Comparing Alternatives
- Testing/Experimenting/Analyzing Consequences
- Making recommendations/Monitoring/Evaluating/Innovating

III. ASK: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Define the policy problem/opportunity

T.1 Power of Inquiry: 5 Whys & 6 Universal Questions



Uses:

- To help the policy problem definition stage to quickly determine some possible root causes of a problem
- Simple and easy to learn and apply

Start with looking at any policy problem and asking “why”? and “what caused this problem”? The first “why” generally prompts a second, third, fourth and fifth “why” ...until the root cause becomes apparent.

For example, why has the machine stopped?

A fuse blew because of an overload

Why was there an overload?

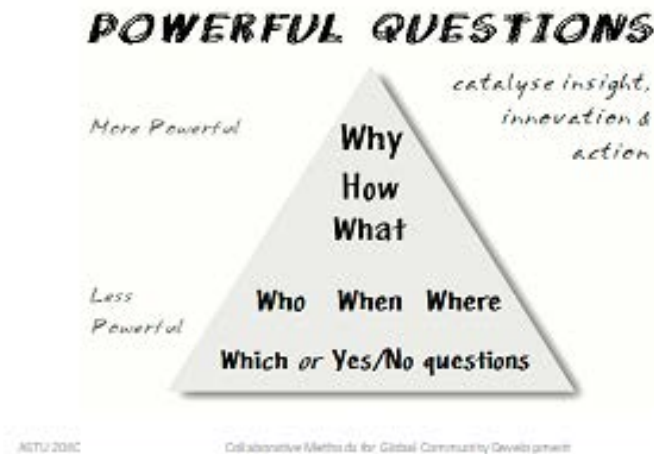
Not enough lubrication for bearings

Why not enough lubrication?

The pump wasn't pumping enough

And so on...

Six universal questions: What? Where? When? How? Why? Who?



- If the “why’s” don’t prompt a fairly quick answer to the “root cause” it means the problem is more complex and may need another technique.

Six universal questions: What? Where? When? How? Why? Who?

III. ASK: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Define the policy problem/opportunity

T.2 Assumption Dumping



Uses

- To make unstated beliefs explicit.
- To develop a shared understanding across diverse groups.
- To explore the problems “behind” the problem or the opportunity.
- To identify opportunities for further research.

Description

- In this simple exercise, participants state their assumptions about a situation or the policy challenge. Then they try to reverse the assumptions to see if new opportunities are revealed.
- Reversing assumptions gives teams a fresh perspective on ideas, values and beliefs, not unlike standing on one’s head!
- This activity also tends to generate rich discussion that helps team members to understand each other’s points of view and explore the origins of those beliefs. In turn, this “unpacking” of assumptions helps the team dive more deeply into the problem to discover its true source.

Tips:

- As in brainstorming, participants should withhold judgment when assumptions are shared.
- Be sensitive to emotions that can be attached to beliefs when “unpacking” assumptions (see positionality checklist & indigenous self-assessment).
- One dumped assumption may reveal others to be explored.
- Write assumptions in large print and keep them visible.
- Keep track of ideas and concepts that emerge when reversing an assumption – they might lead to possible solutions later in the process.

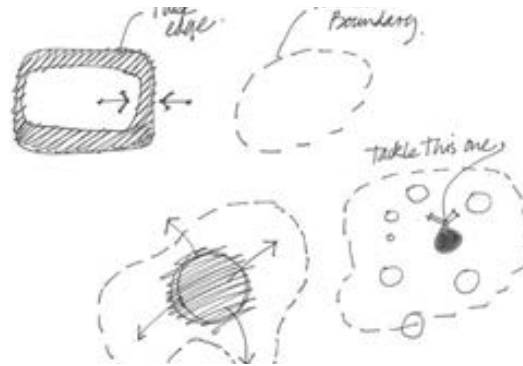
III. ASK: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Define the policy problem/opportunity

T.3 Edges and Boundaries: Scoping

From Designed Leadership:

- Uses
 - Edges and boundaries are places of richness for analysis, ideas, and not-so-obvious solutions.



Scoping a policy problem is one of the most difficult challenges in the strategic-design method. It is so much easier just to accept whatever problem we are given and take a run at solving it. This tends to be a habit—learned early in our lives—that gives the appearance of efficiency and effectiveness. And it is a *modus operandi* that works for some problems—generally the really simple ones. But as problems get more complex and ill-defined, scoping is essential.

By scoping, I mean unpacking the policy problem into its various components—looking at it from all sides and upside down.

Description

We explore the policy problem space and see where the edges are, and how to describe their characteristics. Some problems seem boundary-less and edge-less. The challenge is how to combine edges and boundaries in a way that visually helps us scope a problem, unpack it, and see its edges—fuzzy or clear.

Enter edges and boundaries. Researching and asking questions pushes us over the edge. Information needs to be examined and questioned to see if it belongs. It is also useful to visually map the facts we find. Sometimes the context is just too big to grapple with. In that case, it's good to synthesize and reduce the scope—in essence, to make the edges more crisp and less fuzzy. We need to

think about the context and allow ourselves to change scales as we think about a problem—inside and outside of the predetermined boundary. Or we give ourselves instructions to constantly and consciously change the boundaries. By focusing on edges, those “almost-in/almost-out” areas of a problem, we gain different perspectives.

Tips:

Edges and boundaries as concepts are useful to remind us that the strategic design method is continuous and iterative. Running around the edge of a circle, for example, means that you'll come back to where you started; you can check-in and see whether you are still on track.

III. ASK: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Assemble Evidence/Research/Discovery

T.4 Observations and Insights

- Uses
 - To perform user researcher
 - To look beyond obvious (and boring) behaviour to see the unusual
 - To make our assumption (see assumption technique) and value explicit



What you see and hear – just the facts. Observe real people in action in a relevant environment. Record what you see and hear. Be objective and try to be invisible – do not participate in the activity.

What to look for when observing target policy population:

- Patterns, repeated behaviour
- Unusual/extreme behaviour
- Inconsistencies (what is said vs. what is done)
- Work-arounds / modifications to the environment/situation
- Passion, energy, high activity

Tips

- Write down what you see immediately – no thinking.
- Sit still and do not do anything but observe.
- Write things down. If you rely on memory, you will “taint” your observation with interpretation.
- Practice observing people when you have a few minutes to spare.
 - An insight is an interpretation, a theme or pattern you notice that may reveal what someone thinks or feels, based on clues from what they say or do. Insights enable us to make sense of our observations and help explain the unexpected. Insights bring visibility and clarity to previous hidden meaning. Insights extrapolate individual stories into overarching “truths”. A good insights is authentic (supported by the observations you make); non-obvious (should be “news you can use” not just something someone would immediately think of when describing the subject”) and revealing (if offers a glimpse into how people think or feel) - <https://www.ideo.org/>.



III. ASK: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Assemble Evidence/Research/Discovery

T.5 Eye Phone



Uses

- Eye phone is an exercise that:
 - Helps practice keen observation.
 - To make you think about what you are seeing and why you are choosing to capture that “visual thought”.
 - Helps develop visual storytelling skills.

Description

- How do we see? How do we record and store what we see? And what does it mean?
- Eye phone is a technique that provides you with an opportunity to practice your observations skills.
- Using your smartphone, take photos to build a visual and verbal narrative that tells a story about the “topic” you are currently working on.
- Discipline yourself to choose 8 photos and then only use a double-tweet (280 characters) in total to annotate the photos.

Tips:

- Take lots of photos (like generating lots of ideas) and then choose the eight that best tell your story.
- Experiment with two approaches:
 - Develop a story in advance and choose photos to support the narrative.
 - Let the photos and the experience of taking the photos develop the story.

III. ASK: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Assemble Evidence/Research/Discovery

T.6 Empathy Maps and Interviews

- Uses
 - An approach to finding out as much as possible about a person's experience as a "user" of a space, a policy process, an objective or an environment.
 - Understand the choices that people make and why they make them.
 - About information gathering or more dialogic and co-creative in action research
 - A tool to perform user research.
 - To understand people's experience as they experience a thing, space, context, or process.
 - As a tool to perform user research.
 - To understand people's experience as they use a thing, space or a process.



Notes from Stanford d.school's Bootcamp document on interview process:

- Introduce yourself
- Introduce the project
- Build rapport
- Evoke stories
- Explore emotions
- Question statements
- Thank and Wrap-up

Tips:

- Keep questions to 10 words or less
- Be as neutral as possible in your questions - no right or wrong answers
- One question at a time
- Try to interview in pairs or use a voice recorder
- If an interview is online, use online recording but with the permission of the interviewee
- Encourage stories

IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Envisage Potential/Generate Alternatives

T.7 Develop Criteria

- Uses
 - In order to decide what policy ideas are worth pursuing or testing, we need to know our criteria for success. What criteria are “musts” and what criteria are “nice to haves” or “desirable”.



Criteria:

- Criteria

- noun [Plural]
 - Principles or standards by which something may be judged or decided

- **Two (or more) types:**

- Mandatory criteria – ‘must have’s ... no alternative that does not achieve an acceptable level against any primary criteria will not be considered further
- Desirable criteria – ‘Should have’s ... once primary criteria

Description

Here are various types of criteria to consider:

- Efficacy criteria — potential for progress toward solving the policy problem.
- Stakeholder criteria — potential to ‘fit’ with the needs and wants of stakeholders.
- Implementation criteria — potential to initiate, scale,
- Economic criteria — potential benefit exceeds the potential cost
- Innovation criteria — potential to be a ‘game-changer’ ...

IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Envisage Potential/Generate Alternatives

T.8 Constraints Toggle

- Uses
 - Helps get out of a no-idea jam.
 - Helps generate new ideas.
 - Helps develop project scope and boundary.



Description

When in the process of policy idea generation, think about what constraints are in play. Then eliminate all the constraints for a specific length of time. Then selectively add in constraints and experiment with which ones open up opportunities and which ones close you down.

Tips

- Record the policy constraints used. This can be done on post-its and colour-coded for the importance of constraints.
- Keep track of the different scenarios of using the different policy constraints.

IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Envisage Potential/Generate Alternatives

T.9 Ideas on Steroids' (ideation)

- Uses
 - Ideation techniques help you concentrate on idea generation – the more ideas the better
 - These ideas are the “source material” for prototyping and going the next steps in trying out policy solutions and approaches



Bad Ideas: Worst Possible Idea is an ideation method where we purposefully seek the worst solutions. The “inverted” search process relaxes us, amuses us (humour can be useful) and engaged our creativity. This also helps us examine ideas and evaluate our assumptions (see Assumption Dumption). Bad Ideas encourage divergent thinking and more structured analysis of a problem while pulling the thinker outside an established problem space.

Most bad ideas are extreme variants of existing and potentially good ideas: i.e. bad idea is a car with no engine can contrast with a potentially good variant = a car that runs on solar power.

SCAMPER

SCAMPER is a creative technique that asks questions about existing policy processes using letters as different prompts.

- S = Substitute [components, materials, people]
- C = Combine [mix, combine with other services, integrate]
- A = Adapt [alter, change function, use part of another element]
- M = Modify [increase or reduce scale, change shape, alter]
- P = Put to other uses
- E = Eliminate [remove elements, simplify, reduce to core]
- R = Reverse [turn inside out, upside down, rearrange]

Tips

Steven Johnson: Where Good Ideas Come from:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=NugRZGDbPFU&feature=endscreen>

There are literally hundreds of techniques for generating ideas...

Some methods are merely renamed or slightly adapted versions of more foundational techniques.

- Brainstorm
- Bad Ideas
- SCAMPER
- Mindmap
- Storyboard
- Analogies
- Provocation
- Movement
- Creative Pause

Here's a link to ideation: [https://www.interaction-](https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/stage-3-in-the-design-thinking-process-ideate)

[design.org/literature/article/stage-3-in-the-design-thinking-process-ideate](https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/stage-3-in-the-design-thinking-process-ideate)

IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Envisage Potential/Generate Alternatives

T.10 Scenarios

- Uses
 - To make the abstract more tangible and real.
 - Helps to understand, analyze, and improve upon the abstract.
 - Helps with planning for the future.
 - As a tool for policy modelling.



Description

Future scenario planning was first used in the military to anticipate possible scenarios where the troops would need to respond to threats quickly and effectively. The main logic behind future scenario planning is to plan ahead in order to be able to choose actions accordingly. A quickly made decision to act is always a risk, especially in the business world.

When creating a scenario, two elements are essential: the customer setting and future environments.

Future environments in which the business model might compete: This is not about predicting the future but again about providing detail. Applying scenario-planning techniques to business model innovation forces reflection on how a model might have to evolve under certain conditions.

Tips:

- The more specific and detailed you can be – the better.
 - Identify two sets of drivers, and set them as x and y axes
- Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y. 2010. Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers, John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.

IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Making Choices/Comparing Alternatives

T.11 SIFT . SORT . RANK

- Uses
 - Helps make decisions.
 - Helps narrow down possible options.
 - To create an opportunity.



Description

Sift

- (sift through) put through a sieve so as to isolate that which is most important or useful: until we sift the evidence ourselves, we can't comment objectively |
- (sift out) separate something, esp. something to be discarded, from something else : he asked for streamlined procedures to sift out frivolous applications.

Sort

- arrange systematically in groups; separate according to type, class: she sorted out the clothes, some to be kept, some to be thrown away.
- (sort through) look at (a group of things) one after another in order to classify them or make a selection: she sat down and sorted through her mail.

Rank

Step 1. Develop some criteria to sort your ideas.

- Efficacy criteria — potential for progress toward solving the problem.
- User criteria — potential to 'fit' with the needs and wants of users.
- Implementation criteria — potential to initiate, scale.
- Economic criteria — potential benefit exceeds the potential cost.
- Innovation criteria — potential to be a 'game-changer.'

Step 2. Assign 'tentative' priority to these criteria.

- Sort the criteria generated into at least two groups — mandatory and desirable.
- Some criteria may need greater specificity or definition to proceed — what about [criteria x] is most important?
- You may well add, edit, or reconsider priorities (and these criteria) as you test them.

Step 3. List the alternatives that you want to rank AND the criteria against which you want to rank them

Step 4. Try out one of the decision-making processes, eg. Max Axes, Decision Tree.

Step 5. Use it to select a promising idea to prototype.

Tips:

- What kinds of criteria are going to help to find a policy solution with the right "fit"?
- You could sift, sort, and rank, or you could choose to do one separately (they do not need to be bundled together).

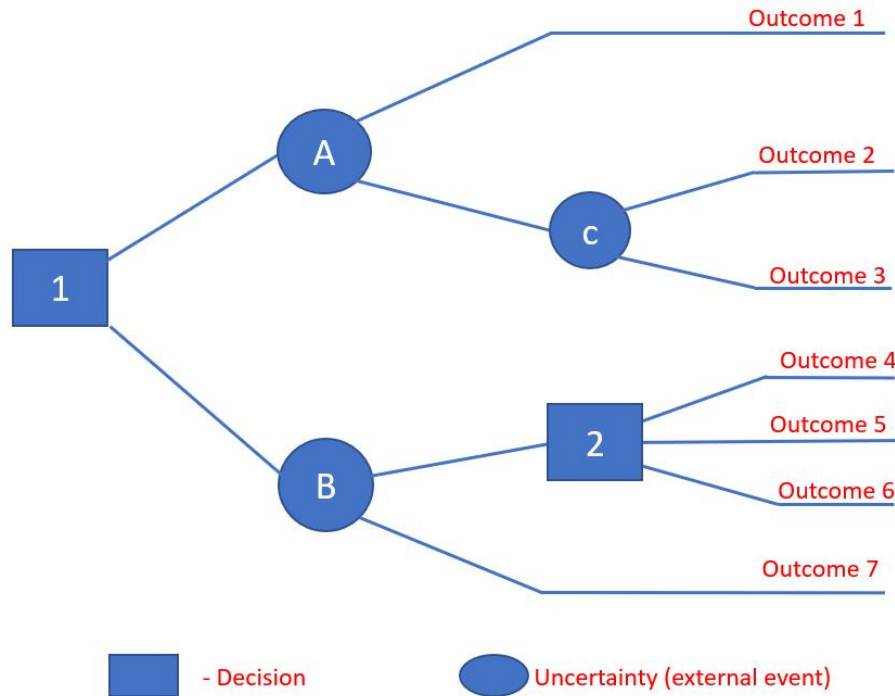
IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Making Choices/Comparing Alternatives

T.12 Decision Tree

- **Uses**

- To help identify a strategy most likely to reach a policy goal.
- Helps form a balanced picture of the risks and rewards associated with each possible course of action.
- Provides a framework to quantify the values of outcomes and the probabilities of achieving them.
- Clearly lays out the problem so that all options can be challenged.



Description

Decision Trees are excellent tools for helping choose between several courses of action using a tree-like graph. They provide a highly effective structure within which you can lay out options and investigate the possible outcomes of choosing those options.

Tips:

- Identify a clear purpose.
- Identify the variables.
- Mind Tools. "Decision Trees." Decision Tree Analysis. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2012. <<http://www.mindtools.com/dectree.html>>.

IV. TRY: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Testing/ Experimenting/ Analyzing Consequences

T.13 PROTOTYPING

- **Uses**

- Traditionally prototyping is thought of as a way to test policy functionality.
- To deepen your understanding of the design space and end-users.
- To test and refine ideas or solutions.
- To inspire (yourself, and others) by showing your vision.



Description

Prototyping is getting ideas and exploration out in the open and in the physical world. A prototype can be anything that takes a physical form – be it a wall of post-it notes, a role-playing activity, a space, an object, an interface, or even a storyboard. Prototypes should be rough and rapid to allow learn quickly and investigate a lot of different possibilities.

When we are talking about physical artifacts – like products or buildings – it is easy to understand what is meant by prototyping – rough sketches to full-scale models. Business models are prototyped in a conceptual way. A business model prototype can be a rough sketch on a napkin or a detailed business model canvas.

Tips:

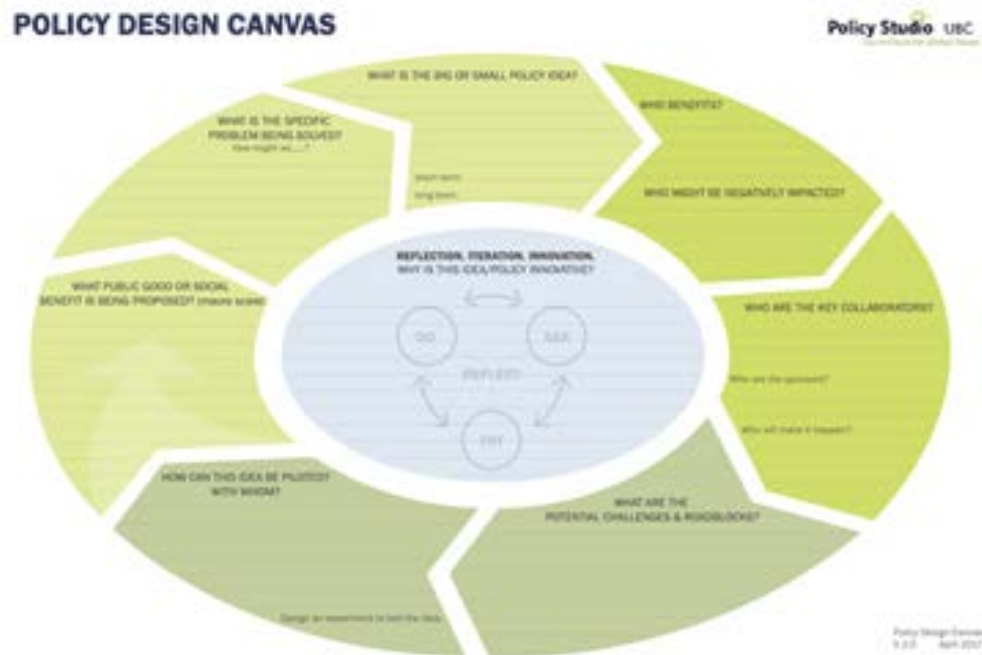
- Prototypes are most successful when people can experience and interact with them. What you learn from those interactions can help shape more successful solutions.

V. DO: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

Although the DO stage might sound like a completion step of policy design, this guide is designed to be fluid, always feel free to cycle back to previous stages such as ASK and TRY to explore or re-explore techniques until a policy solution is arrived at.

Making Recommendations/ Monitoring/ Evaluating/ Innovating

T.14 POLICY DESIGN CANVAS



- **Uses**
 - Helps us think through the various questions that are required as we move through the policy design process
 - Visual tool so we can more easily see connections and gaps
- **Description**
 - A visual canvas – extrapolated from the Business Model Generation Canvas from Alex Osterwalder. <https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas>
- **Tips**
 - Create your own Policy Design Canvas – can also create a Policy Implementation Canvas.

VI. REFLECTIONS

DESIGN . CREATE . REFLECT

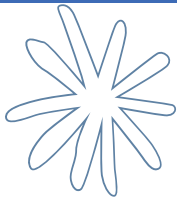
- Ask. Try. Do



VI. REFLECTIONS

DESIGN . CREATE . REFLECT

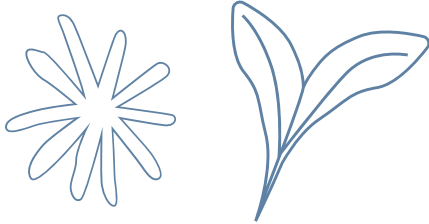
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VI. REFLECTIONS

DESIGN . CREATE . REFLECT

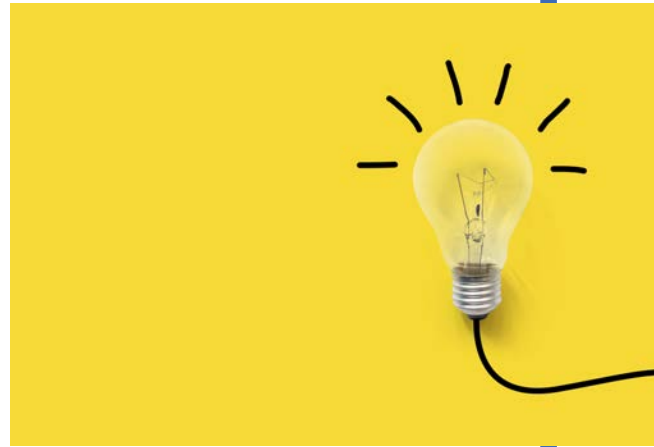
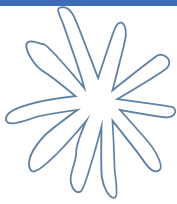
- Ask. Try. Do



VI. REFLECTIONS

DESIGN . CREATE . REFLECT

- Ask. Try. Do



VII. APPENDIX

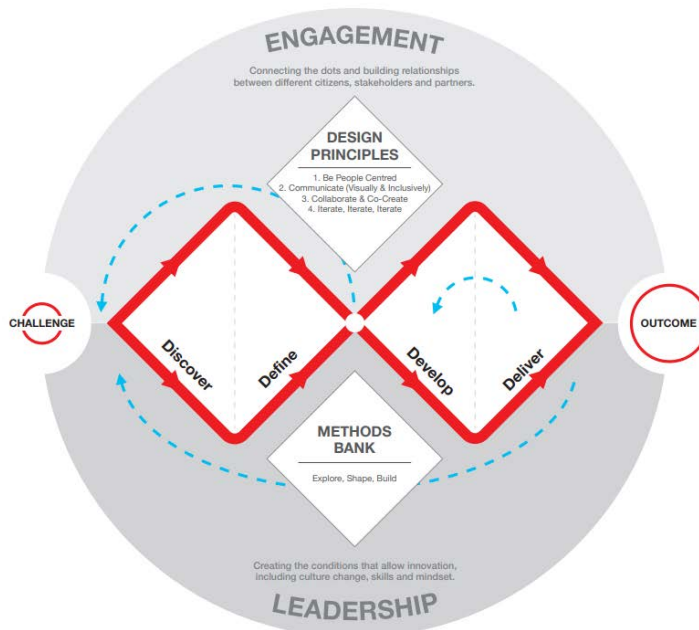
Appendix A: Bardach and other policy Analysis Process

Bardach, E. (2015). *A practical guide for policy analysis: the eightfold path to more effective problem-solving*. SAGE.

BARDACH EIGHTFOLD PATH



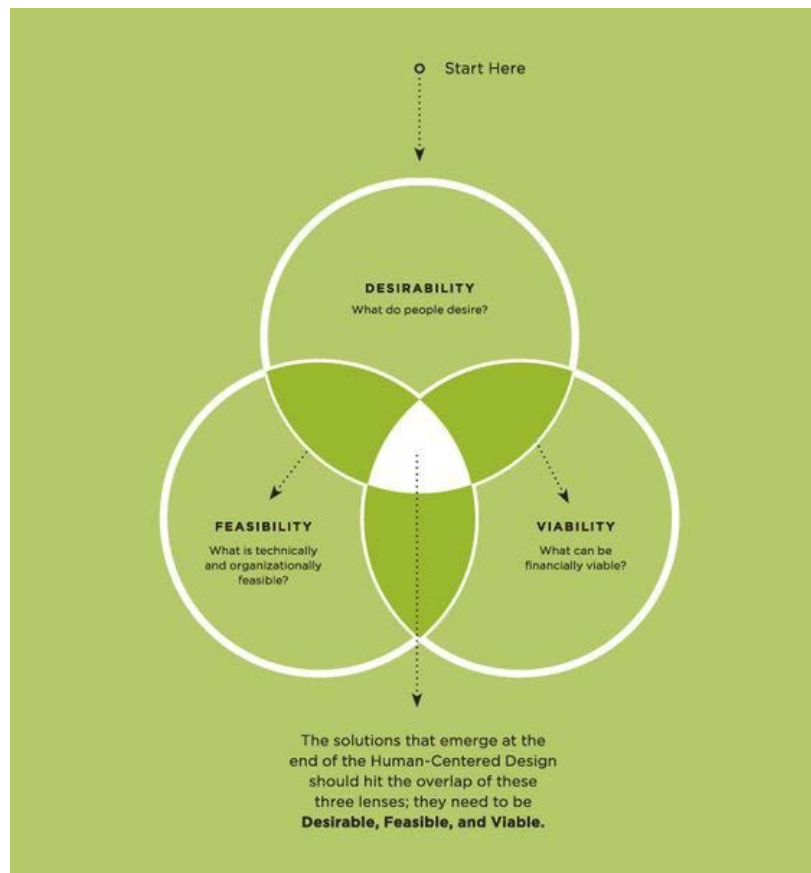
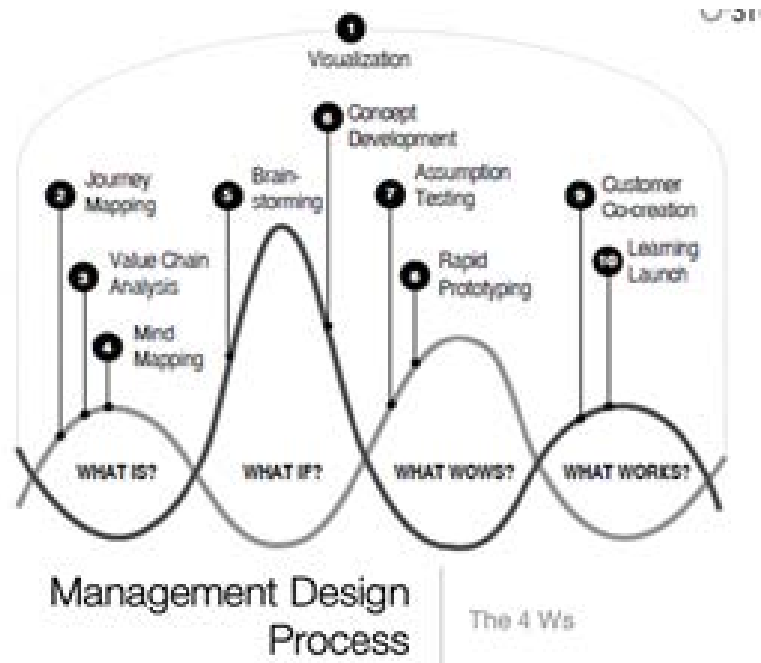
Appendix B: Other Design Processes



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VII. APPENDIX CONTD...

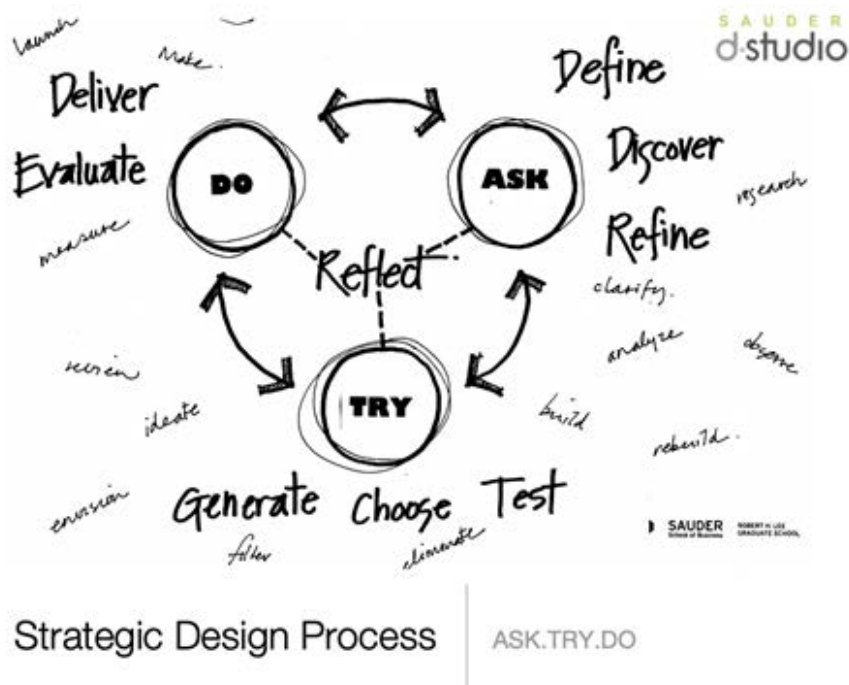
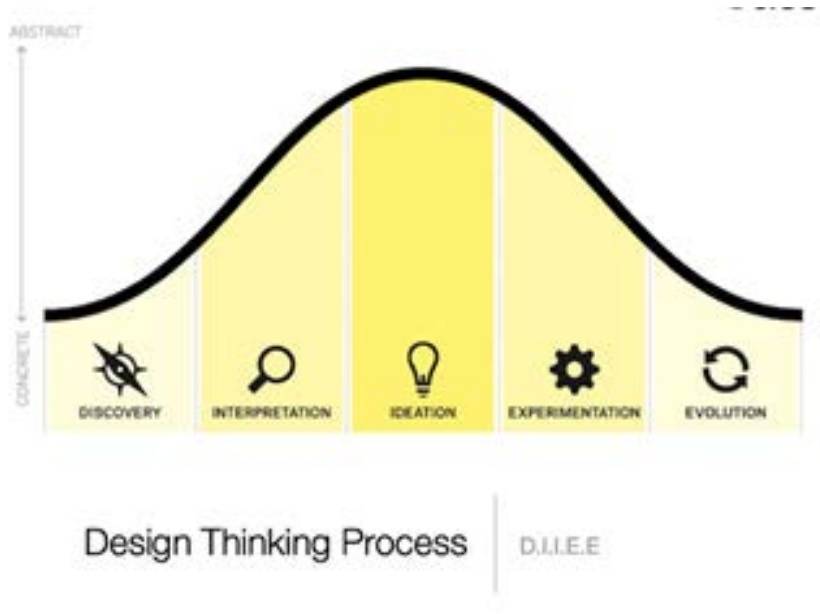
Appendix B: Other Design Processes



IDEO's Three lenses of Human Centered Design

VII. APPENDIX CONTD

Appendix B: Other Design Processes



VII. APPENDIX CONTD...

Appendix C: Resources

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- Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSdMMzMX54Y>
- Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msdm9qbHjts>
- Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNMghBIqVRE>
- Part 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JT0snodVgBg>
- Part 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBe4zHIP7Pk>
- Part 6: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV6_xGJL8w4

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CONTACT

UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs
1855 West Mall, Vancouver, BC
<https://sppga.ubc.ca/>

