

## Teaching Design Thinking in B Schools: *lessons learned and surprises suffered*

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# The courses we teach at Darden

## **Degree Programs:**

Corporate Innovation and Design Experience

Creativity and Design (EMBA)

## **Executive Education:**

The Physics of Business Growth: Mindsets, Systems, and Processes

Design Thinking Workshop

# The Growth Leader Field Research

## **Database:**

70+ leaders from the U.S. and Europe operating in the for profit and not-for-profit sectors

## **Criteria for selection:**

Mid-line or business unit managers responsible for organic growth significantly and sustainably exceeding market growth

## **Methodology:**

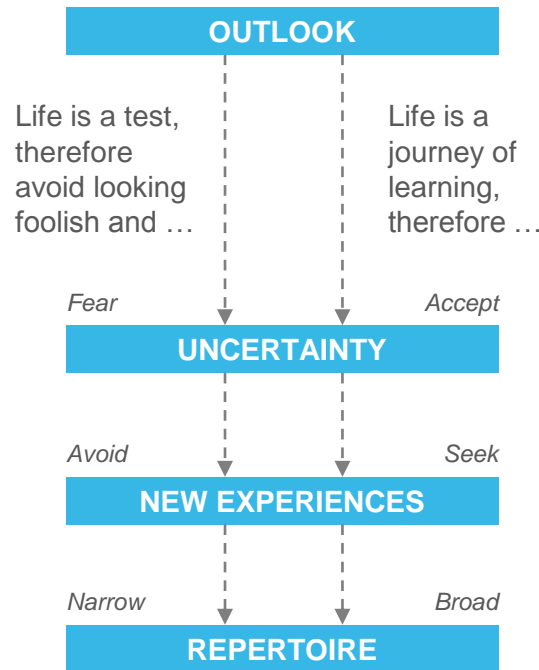
- Personal interviews
- DiSC Assessments
- Peer surveys

# Findings

## Vicious Cycle Fixed Mindset



## Virtuous Cycle Growth Mindset



# Course Development Goals

Hypothesis Generation and Testing

Cultivating a Growth Mindset

Develop a Deep Understanding of Customer needs

# What is Design Thinking?

Design thinking is a systematic approach to problem solving. What would be different if managers thought more like designers?

## **Problem solving would be driven by three core beliefs:**

**Empathy** – start by establishing a deep understanding of human needs

**Invention** – discover new possibilities

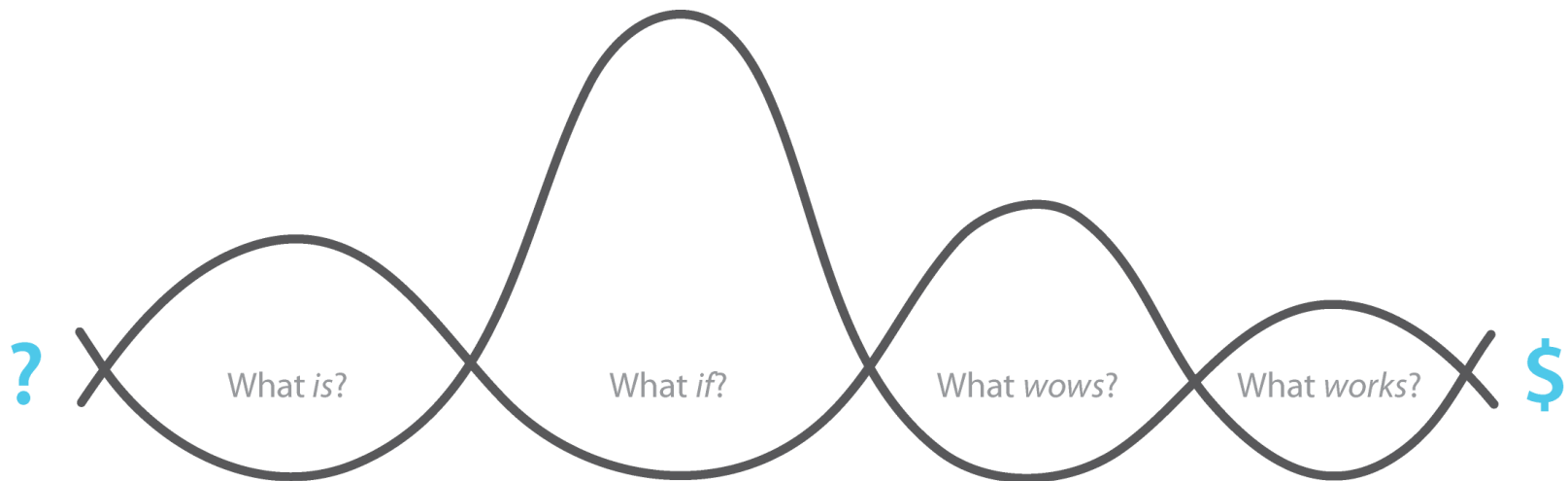
**Iteration** – use the first solutions only as stepping stones to a better one

# Business and design differ in fundamental ways

	BUSINESS	DESIGN
<b>Underlying Assumptions</b>	Rationality, objectivity; Reality as fixed and quantifiable	Subjective experience; Reality as socially constructed
<b>Method</b>	Analysis aimed at proving one “best” answer	Experimentation aimed at iterating toward a “better” answer
<b>Process</b>	Planning	Doing
<b>Decision Drivers</b>	Logic; Numeric models	Emotional insight; Experiential models
<b>Values</b>	Pursuit of control and stability; Discomfort with uncertainty	Pursuit of novelty; Dislike of status quo
<b>Levels of Focus</b>	Abstract or particular	Iterative movement between abstract and particular

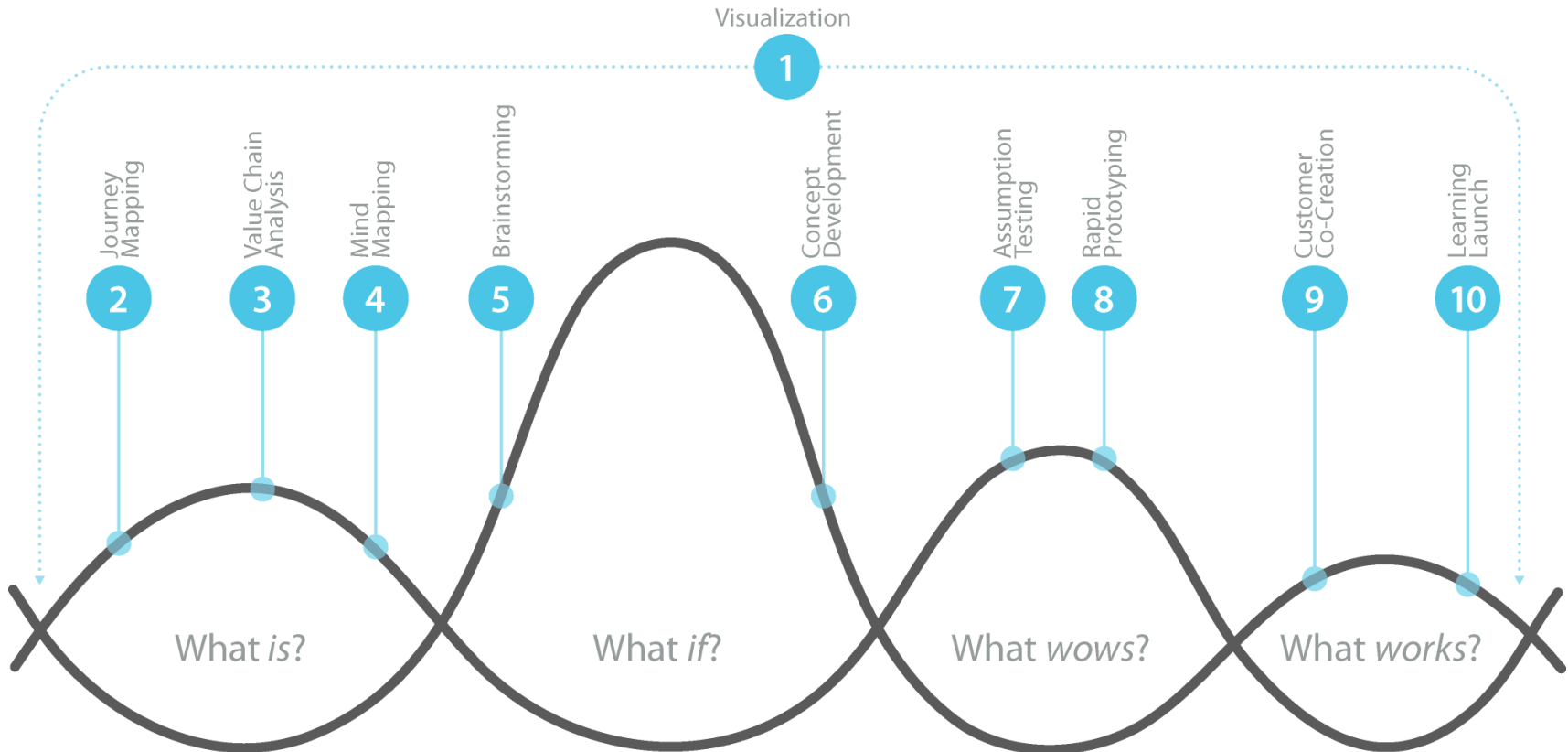
# Design as a problem solving approach

Better reflecting the reality of what growth leaders actually do





# Basic Design Tool Kit



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# Corporate Innovation and Design Experience

Semester long

Project based in teams

Intensive 3 hour sessions meet once per week

Few cases

Faculty intensive

# Pedagogical Challenges

Experimental as well as experiential

Requires a tolerance for both ambiguity *and* inefficiency

The case method builds bad habits

MBAS have not experienced the failure of analytic methodologies

My own repertoire is lacking

# Lessons Learned – or surprises suffered?

Journaling is essential

Clients are the source of more intractable problems than students

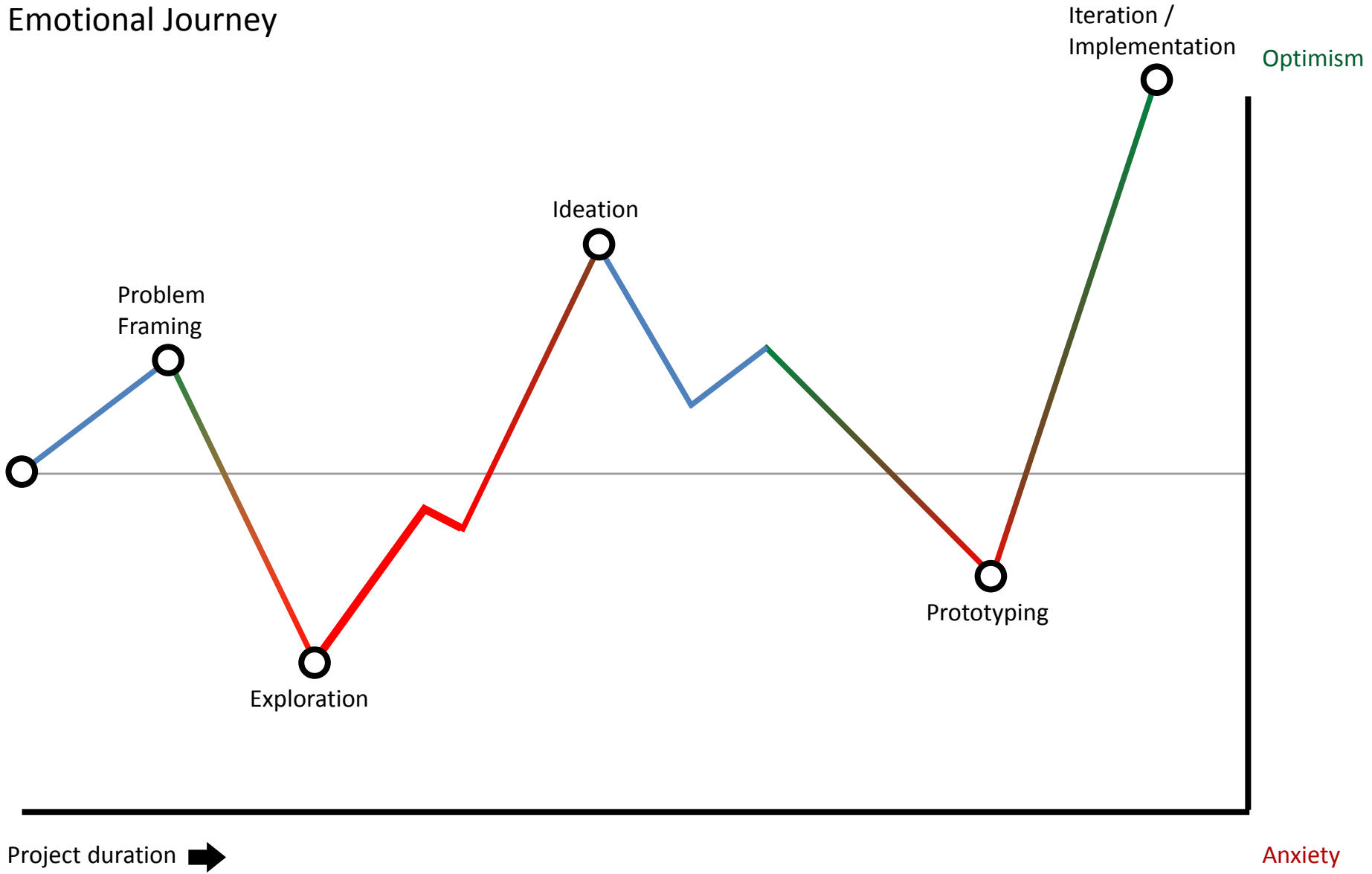
Delivering data in visuals rather than text is more permissible

Choice matters more – in projects, in team selection

Students need more structure and support than the case method teacher in me is comfortable with

Pay attention to their emotional journey

# Emotional Journey



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